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ABSTRACT

This volume consists of six papers. "Harold Pinter's 'The Birthday Party': A Language Problem in the Teaching of Literature," by J. McDonough, examines the area of overlap between the style of Pinter and the teaching of literature to foreign undergraduate students of English. "Linguistic and Psychological Background to Sequencing of Initial Presentation in TEFL," by S. H. McDonough, discusses the decisions that have to be made in sequencing units of "common core" of a foreign language for beginners, and outlines the contribution of psychology to this process. "Revolutionary Epistemics and Language Learning," by J. T. Roberts, discusses the implications for institutional language teaching of the view that the educational process in Britain and other countries is ill-conceived and should be changed. "Rebuilding a Pedagogy of Language," by M. Taylor, is a response to the preceding paper. "Cognitive-Experiential Second Language Learning," by I. M. Roca, and "A French Reading Course," by P. J. Brew, describe two courses at the University of Essex. (AM)

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Harold Pinter's The Birthday Party: A language problem in the teaching of literature.

J. McDonough

The aim of this article is to enquire into the point of overlap between, on the one hand, the style of Harold Pinter as exemplified in The Birthday Party, and on the other, the teaching of literature to foreign undergraduates studying English. Thus the rationale for this short investigation is not provided by either of these areas per se, but by their point of contact.

The impetus for the enquiry - though I would claim that its conclusions are generalisable - was given by the experience of teaching undergraduates following a traditional language/literature English course at a German university. In this case, Pinter was 'dealt with' in the language classes, a not inconvenient situation, if for the moment one allows the assumption that Pinter's work cannot be divorced from the dynamics of the verbal interaction. Most students first reacted to Pinter's writing by describing it as 'boring' or 'odd': indeed his native speaker critics have likewise referred to the externals of his style as 'obviously banal' (J.R. Brown, 1968); to 'the dialogue's triviality' (J.R. Brown, 1968); and to the 'apparently banal exchanges' (J.R. Taylor, 1962). I am concerned here to analyse why a confrontation with Pinter is particularly problematic for a non-native speaker, even more so when the characteristics of his style and the language learning background of the students have at best only a tangential relation. Given this claim, I shall first briefly describe the teaching background in so far as it is relevant here, then sketch selected approaches to a study of literary style, principally from the standpoint of stylistics, the bridge between linguistics and the language of literature. Next, a few examples from an analysis of The Birthday Party will be given with a view to pointing up more clearly the problems mentioned in the first two sections. Finally, an attempt will be made to draw together the various threads of the investigation.

As far as the teaching background is concerned, my contention is that both school and university language teaching syllabuses concentrate to a great extent on a formal, non-contextualised 'grammar book' approach to the teaching of languages and, by requiring the attainment of a neutral ability, tend to result in the language being itemised into discrete formal components to be digested somehow by the learner. Whilst it is not possible to specify the needs of the general learner very precisely, and further, it is arguable that a formal knowledge of the language should be demanded of a future teacher of English (as most of the German students in question were), it can nevertheless

be maintained that such an approach, except perhaps in the area of some aspects of literary style, largely ignores most facets of the variety of language in use. It obscures the fact that the relation of form to function is often not one to one (for example, an apparent interrogative such as "Will you go out for a moment?" might be a covert imperative), nor does it sufficiently examine the use of language according to situational factors such as perception of the role(s) of interlocutors and level of formality, affecting both syntactic and lexical choice. It seems illuminating in this context to use an important area of sociolinguistics as a conceptual framework, namely the notion of 'communicative competence'. Hymes (1971), taking issue with Chomsky (1965), maintains that 'competence' consists in a knowledge (not necessarily explicit) not only of what constitutes a grammatically well-formed utterance of a language, but also of the appropriacy of that utterance in context - 'speaking rules' as well as 'formation rules'. I am suggesting here that whether Hymes' contention is valid or not for scientific grammars, it can be used to criticise the over-concentration in traditional language teaching on the target language as a grammatical system, at the expense of including a more deneutralised study of the language on a lower plane of idealisation. Thus if a non-native speaker not only has no intuitive knowledge of the manifestations of communicative competence in the target language, but teaching methodology also denies him pedagogic access to it, then he has little hope of successfully following a Pinter play, especially since the play's characters possess such competence by virtue of being native speakers of English. The foreign student and Pinter will run along separate tracks. Jakobovits (1968) makes a similar point to Hymes: in his mentalistic model of language performance, he distinguishes between 'linguistic' and 'communicative' competence, maintaining that the latter consists in a knowledge not only of linguistic 'dictionary' meaning but also of 'implicit' and 'implicative' meaning. These last two constitute what he calls an 'elliptically derived conceptual representation' of the former, 'implicit' meaning referring to a speaker's relation to a conceptual event and 'implicative' to the relation of one speaker to another. Hence neutral knowledge is claimed to be insufficient in a performance theory, and, one can contend, in the learning of a foreign language too, since the speaker/learner will be too far removed from applications of that knowledge.

One must also look briefly at the traditional teaching of literature. To generalise, classify, sub-classify and label according to period, genre, literary movement and so on is a necessary part of literary criticism, which needs categorisation

if it is not to be piecemeal and arbitrary. In teaching, however, one is often faced as a result with generalisations being imposed on a work before the work itself has been examined, whereas it seems that the classifying and generalising operation, except in terms of tentative hypotheses, would be more illuminating for a student if it postdated the study of texts. To take the case of Pinter: he is frequently classified under the heading of the 'Theatre of the Absurd', but though his work does exhibit many characteristics of Absurdist writing, the classification is misleading, since it all too often leads to the assumption that any features established for writers such as Ionesco can be applied wholesale to Pinter's writing. Similarly, it may be possible to postulate the existence of literary universals, and to accept, with van Djik (1972) the notion of 'semantic macro-operations' in literary texts, expressible in terms of deep structure rules such as those of narrative structure. This represents a theoretical standpoint parallel to, though much less developed than, that of generative grammar, and however valid in its own terms, is of little help in a teaching situation unless the surface manifestations of such 'macro-structures' have first been examined. Finally in this brief discussion of the teaching of literature, I would like to suggest that there is often an emphasis on intrinsic, 'immanent' analyses of texts and their expression of timeless values with too little regard for their culture-bound nature. Perhaps Pinter's achievement will be seen ultimately to lie in his expression of fundamental existential images of the 'human condition', but 'expression' is a key word here. To appreciate Pinter one needs linguistic information, defined functionally, and understanding of the affective use of language and of varieties and register, direct cultural information, and an awareness of such para- and non-linguistic features, related both to language and more broadly to communications systems, as gesture, facial expressions, tone of voice, distance between and relative positions of interlocutors. (See for example work reported in Robinson, 1972, and Laver and Hutcheson, 1972). All of these interrelate, and all are necessary concomitants of a full analysis.

Two approaches to the study of literary style can now be selected as a framework for an analysis of Pinter's work (as exemplified here by The Birthday Party) which will help to relate it to the teaching situation outlined above. Enkvist (1971), among others, has suggested that the notion of stylistic deviance is two-pronged. Firstly, there is the rather limited kind which depends on breaking a grammatical or lexical norm

(as in the work of James Joyce or Dylan Thomas, for instance); secondly, there is what Enkvist calls 'stylostatistical deviance' (in Halliday's (1973) terms, 'deflection' from some expected frequency pattern) which is more ubiquitous. With reference to Pinter, it is certainly helpful to examine his texts in this latter sense of style, as an accumulation of various non-deviant features which exhibit a certain tendency and which as a result determine the text's significance. Thus the text will establish a context within which the language will be able to define itself by virtue of the relations, both linguistic and non-linguistic, that it enters into. The 'semantic whole' of The Birthday Party and its language, can be shown to be mutually defining. For instance, a structure that is 'unmarked' in most contexts is 'marked' in the context of the play: Meg's "There's no cornflakes" towards the end of the play has become overlaid with great significance.

I have already referred to Hymes' notion of 'communicative competence' and to Jakobovits' related performance theory. This leads one to the second approach to style that is relevant here, namely the assumption that style is best seen as mentalistic, both in its composition and its perception (cf. also Thorne, 1970). If then this assumption is true, that the rules of communicative as well as grammatical competence have been internalised by the native speaker, it can be hypothesised that he will have intuitions about style not immediately available to the non-native speaker, and there will thus be a qualitative difference in the nature of their stylistic perception. The difference will be all the more acute if 'communicative competence' is largely absent from the teaching syllabus and if the text in question has no immediately striking deviant grammatical features. It is relevant here to refer to an interesting schema (Riffaterre, 1959) which relates to a mentalistic approach to style in that it emphasises the importance of the reader in the decoding process. Riffaterre stresses the interdependence between the 'S(tylistic) D(evice) and its perception', to the extent that he sees it as possible to 'use this perception to locate stylistic data in the literary discourse' (p.419). The basic point, that the reader/decoder can be used as a criterion for analysis, is important, and the system might be used with interesting results with non-native speakers, so that their reactions to a text could be fed back into an examination in general of their (stylistic) perception of the foreign language. In the light of what has been said here, one would hypothesise that, since a text is encoded within a particular culture, then the decoding process could only

function optimally with a native speaker from the same culture, and the average foreign learner could at best approximate an understanding, the degree of approximation depending to a large extent on the teaching programme. Guiraud (1971), in a similar vein to Riffaterre, writes "what happens is that the reader decodes a text by recovering the author's code; it is of course possible to read without knowing anything of the author's code, but that can hardly be accepted as successful reading." (p.23).

A few examples from an analysis of The Birthday Party may now serve to illustrate some of the above contentions. Pinter has made the following kind of statement about language: "... a character on the stage who can present no convincing argument or information as to his past experiences, his present behaviour or his aspirations, nor give a comprehensive analysis of his motives, is as legitimate and as worthy of attention as one who, alarmingly, can do all these things." (Quoted in J.R. Taylor, 1962; p.301). He has also referred elsewhere to "a language ... where, under what is said, another thing is being said." (Pinter, 1962). Pinter's literary and theatre critics have formulated this by invoking Stanislawski's notion of 'subtext', which refers to 'the deeper significance' of language as opposed to its surface manifestations as 'text'. (Referred to, for example, in J.R. Brown, 1972). This general orientation to the language of the play provides us with a constant against which we can view the fluctuating patterns of both linguistic and non-linguistic behaviour. This behaviour falls into two major categories: firstly, that associated with the characters' presentation of self, and secondly, the ways in which self-presentation operates in the context of interaction. I would like to make another general claim that the essence of the first category is self-assertion and/or self-preservation, where the contours of the self are hardened rather than flexible, and that the interactive category of behaviour consists in assymetrical relationships, where characters either win or lose, dominate or submit, but do not 'share' (in Watson's and Potter's terms, 1962).

With this general framework of reference in mind, one might distinguish four key areas for analysis. These areas will now be listed, and examples from the play given to point up the significance of each. (It is important to stress that these areas interweave, in the 'contrapuntal' manner which Halliday (1970) refers to when discussing the multi-functionality of language).

1. Linguistic

By this is meant primarily (a) a functional approach to language in the sense outlined above. Furthermore, (b), if this area is defined by the notion of 'communicative competence', it must also include the breakdown of that competence in (situational) non-appropriacy conditions, where expectations set up by the linguistic context are not fulfilled.

Examples

(a) The first scene of the play, between Meg and Petey, shows the dominance of the wife and the acquiescence of the husband, and thus sets the pattern for all other relationships and interaction sequences in the play. The assymetry of their relationship is of course evident in the sheer number of words on Meg's part, but also in the form/function discrepancy of many of her utterances. An apparent statement "You read me out some nice bits yesterday" (p.10) is functionally an imperative to Petey to "Read me out some more"; apparent interrogatives (for instance, Meg's "Are you back?" after she has actually seen Petey on his return from work (p.9)), are 'marked' in context, in this case in the sense of Jakobson's (1960) 'phatic' function of language, phatic messages being those "primarily serving to establish, to prolong, or to discontinue communication, to check whether the channel works, to attract the attention of the interlocutor, or to confirm his continued attention." (p.301).

(b) There is a clear example of an obstruction of expectations in the sense at the beginning of Act II (pp.37-42), where McCann and Stanley confront each other for the first time. Stanley tries to initiate chat on a phatic level, to avoid the threat which McCann clearly represents, but McCann serves to increase Stanley's nervousness by not replying with the expected inconsequential remark to match Stanley's opening gambits:

Stanley: A charming town, don't you think?

McCann: I don't know it. (p.39)

Or, more obviously, in reply to Stanley's metalingual enquiry (p.40):

Stanley: Do you know what I mean?

McCann: No.

2. Paralinguistic and non-linguistic

Work by sociolinguists, social psychologists and anthropologists has highlighted the importance in communication of (for example) such factors as hesitation, pause, tone of voice, gesture, facial expression, eye contact, posture and distance apart of interlocutors. (See references on p.4 above), and their relation to language. Each of these could be used in a study of Pinter, but one example, that of hesitation, must suffice. (The stage directions go a long way to pointing up many of the features enumerated here).

Example

Goldberg is scarcely ever described - with one important exception - as hesitating, and we perceive him, intuitively, as dominant and glib. Crystal and Davy (1969, ch.4) suggest that a person who hesitates little is suspect, because "one gets labelled as a 'smooth' talker, for instance, which rather suggests that hesitation phenomena are of primary significance in determining the acceptability or otherwise of conversation." (p.104). The important exception in Goldberg's speech occurs towards the end of the play, when he temporarily breaks down, hesitates (e.g. p.71) and eventually admits he is nervous (p.76).

3. Micro-contextual

This area relates closely to 1. and 2., and is intended to cover the cumulative effect of linguistic and other features over the whole play, creating it as a 'whole'. One such instance, that of the way in which Meg's last remark about cornflakes (p.67) has acquired greater significance, has already been mentioned.

Example

We might also look at pronominal reference to Stanley by Meg. Early in the play, when Petey and Stanley are both present, she uses the third person singular pronoun and not direct address, to refer to him as if talking to a child: "So he's come down at last, has he? He's come down at last for his breakfast."

This is taken up in a more sinister way during the party itself, when Meg says (e.g. p.55) "He's my Stanley now." Stanley has become reified, an object to be owned by Meg and destroyed by Goldberg and McCann.

4. Macro-contextual

This refers to those parts of the play which make use of external reference and which thus require a wider cultural knowledge that is not available from simply reading/seeing the play.

Example

Esslin (1968) has entertainingly shown the dangers of mis-interpretation with insufficient cultural awareness, and his examples also illustrate the importance of place names in the author's encoding of his plays. For instance, Esslin refers to a German translation of The Birthday Party: McCann's "What about Drogheda?" = "Was ist mit Stärkungs-mitteln?" = "what about fortifying tablets or drugs?": Goldberg's "Who watered the wicket in Melbourne?" = "Wer hat an das Stadttor von Melbourne gepinkelt?" = "Who peed against the city gate of Melbourne?" As Esslin concludes, after such a translation "What remains is something of the plot, something of the characters as revealed by their actions rather than their words. And that is precious little." In fact, place names in Pinter could constitute a study of their own: the randomness of their choice is only apparent, and they are an important expression of the orientation of both plays and characters.

These examples are only a very small proportion of those that could be given, and are simply intended to indicate potential problem areas for foreign students. We must now try briefly to examine the relation of these areas to the pedagogical considerations.

We can conclude that there is a problem of language (as well as para- and non-linguistic) function, and socio-cultural reference. As far as the former is concerned, it can be argued that a student need not have too much difficulty because he possesses 'communicative competence' in his own language and is therefore intuitively aware, for example, that language form and language function are not isomorphically related, and that 'competence' is defined by appropriacy as well as accuracy conditions. Firstly, the

notions of linguistic and communicative competence are concerned with 'knowledge', certainly, but with the kind of knowledge that is not consciously possessed, so although a speaker of any language will 'know' about these problems, the knowledge will need to be consciously activated to be useful in a teaching situation. Secondly, the relation of the teaching of literature to the rest of the language teaching syllabus is clear: as long as the student is required to attain a formal and abstract knowledge of the target language the smaller will be the area of fruitful overlap between the language and literature components, and the less the teacher of literature will be able to capitalise on the student's intuitive knowledge. Allen and Widdowson (1974) and Widdowson (1975) make this point in relation to the different but related study of the language of science and the teaching of 'English for Special Purposes' or 'English for Science and Technology'. The contention is that the language of science, if viewed functionally as a communication system rather than formally as a list of structures, is in a sense neutral in respect of different languages, and it is, then, the task of the language teacher to use the student's non-language-specific awareness of language function to "show how it is realised through the medium of a different language." (Widdowson, 1975, p.7). Looked at in this wider, non-itemised perspective, the language of, in this study, Pinter's plays must be more approachable for a non-native speaker.

I have tried to study one play of Pinter's in a foreign language teaching situation along various parameters - the methodology of language teaching, the methodology of the teaching of literature, literary criticism, socio-linguistics and stylistics. My claim is that, the more these are seen, and allowed to interweave, the more productive will be foreign student's perception of the study of both language and literature.

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Linguistic and Psychological Background to Sequencing of Initial Presentation in TEFL.

S.H. McDonough

This paper is primarily concerned with decisions that have to be taken in sequencing the units of the "common core" of a foreign language when it is the first time the learners have been exposed to that language, and will attempt to outline the contribution of psychology to that decision-making process.

For some time it was held that the information that was most useful to the syllabus-constructor faced with the problem of sequencing the language material was the linguistic description of the target language. According to applied linguists such as Lado (1964, 1970), the order in which the 'patterns' of English sentence structure should be taught was the order of increasing complexity of the patterns derived from English by distributional analysis. (The method of linguistic enquiry advocated by the American school of structural linguistics. v. Fries, C.C. (1957)). Linguists such as Chomsky (1965) and Postal (1964) have documented the linguistic shortcomings of this approach, for example by demonstrating that two sentences may share the same 'pattern' at the proposed level of analysis, but have quite different structural properties at another level:

John is eager to please

John is easy to please

A student introduced to the language strictly by the 'pattern' approach would presumably therefore not be able to distinguish these sentences except in so far as he knew the lexical meanings of 'eager' and 'easy'. He may not spot the fact that in (1) John is the 'actor', i.e. does the pleasing, but in (2), is the 'benefactor' or 'recipient'.

The linguistic criticisms, though devastating, are not the only ones. Psychologists, more particularly psycholinguists, have raised the objection that the ascending order of complexity referred only to linguistic complexity; that there was no reason to assume that linguistic complexity was identical with psychological difficulty. After all, the complexity of the verb phrase in a structuralist grammar was measured as the number of different form-classes which followed the verb. There was no reason to think that this should be a measure of difficulty. On the basis of the 'laws' of transfer of training, and particularly the 'law' that the learning of new responses to stimuli for which the person already has a repertoire of established responses (Jakobovits, 1970) produces negative

transfer, i.e. the learning of new responses to the same stimuli is made more difficult by the interference from the old responses, Lado predicted that difficulty in the structures of the new language would arise where the new language was different. Contrastive analysis of the two languages would then provide the basis for prediction of learning difficulty. This approach has not been vindicated by subsequent research. For example, errors in second language learning attributable to LI interference have been estimated at only one third of the total errors (George, 1971). It is not surprising that this approach to 'difficulty' in second language learning has not been successful, since it was ultimately based on the dubious proposition that the learning of a second language could be compared with the learning of a second list of paired associates.

Generative linguists have provided the principles upon which a fully explicit account of the rules and the order in which they must apply can be constructed. Such a grammar can generate all and only the sentences of the language, and is the most parsimonious possible, i.e. is 'generatively adequate'. A transformational rule represents a process; the order in which the rules apply in a derivation is dictated by the 'simplicity metric' of parsimony governing the description of the syntactic and phonological processes of the language. It has been claimed that explicit information of this sort can be used as explanation in studies of child language acquisition (e.g. Brown, 1973) and as prescription in syllabus planning. Thus Brown has suggested that 'cumulative derivational complexity' will predict the sequence of acquisition of language items, and by the same logic designers of instructional sequences may grade material:
"We do not simply count the number of optional transformations in a derivation, since this procedure involves the generally unwarranted assumption that any one transformation, or some other feature, involves the same increment to complexity of knowledge as any other. In our cumulative sense of complexity a construction x+y may be regarded as more complex than either x or y because it involves everything in either of the constructions alone plus something more." (1973) In studies of child language acquisition it has been shown (Bellugi, 1968) that at a certain stage children acquiring English can either negate (x) or invert (y), but not both (x+y), thus producing

Child: "Old lady, where can you find some toys?" but

Child: *"Old lady, why you can't run?"

Undoubtedly the notion of rule-ordering in a transformational grammar can have important implications for decisions about sequencing, not the least being that it provides a rational and principled framework for predicting difficulties within the language: if it can be established for example that transformation q can only apply after transformation p, then it may seem at first sight reasonable to assume that learners cannot be expected to handle q transformation successfully until they have mastered p. An example of rule-ordering is provided by Jacobs and Rosenbaum's analysis of imperatives (1968, ch.7). They postulate two transformations, the reflexive transformation and the imperative transformation. They must be applied in the order

1. reflexive transformation

2. imperative transformation

and the derivation goes as follows:

deep structure string "you wash you"

reflexive "you wash yourself"

imperative "wash yourself!"

The difficulty with this approach, as has been pointed out by Allen (1974, p.63), is that the transformations operate on abstract phrase markers; consequently any strict application of generative linguistic grammar would have to begin with the fundamental categories or abstract symbols of the grammar, which would be unacceptable to any class wishing merely to begin by saying "Good morning, Miss".

While early experimentation seemed to support the idea that transformations were descriptions not only of linguistic but also psychological processes, e.g. the experiments by Miller and McKean (1964) on the time taken to match sentences in different syntactic forms, and Savin and Perchonock (1965), and therefore, by implication, that 'derivational complexity' could be equated with difficulty of processing, it has more recently been accepted that those experiments ignored two elements which, when included, on occasion, reverse the original findings. These two elements are denotation and situation context. Herriott (1969), for example, showed that sentences in the passive voice are just as easy to comprehend as actives if there are strong expectations concerning the roles denoted:

The doctor treated the patient

The patient was treated by the doctor

and the same is true if the expectations are violated:

The patient treated the doctor

The doctor was treated by the patient

but with the second pair of sentences, people took longer to name 'actor' and 'acted upon'. If there are no expectations, transformational complexity predicts 'difficulty' of comprehension: the active sentence

The brother hated his sister

was easier than the corresponding passive form. Wason, P.C. and J. Greene (discussed in Wason, P.C., and Johnson-Laird,P., 1973, Chap.3) have shown that in certain "natural" contexts, namely when denying a presupposition held by the hearer, negative sentences are the "easiest" to produce. These examples from what is now a vast literature on sentence processing indicate that for a syllabus that claims to present the language items for teaching in realistic settings, i.e. using the language examples in contexts similar to those where the examples would be used by native speakers, psychological difficulty of acquisition is not adequately predictable from transformational complexity, at least as described in the so-called "Standard Theory", derived from Chomsky (1965).

However, by no means all linguistic grammars are organised on the basis of rules in a sequence. Halliday has argued (1970) that language exhibits a type of structure which he describes by the musical analogy of "polyphony". During any utterance, choices are made by the speaker and understood by the hearer in a number of "systems" of the language simultaneously. Although each system is hierarchically ordered in the sense that choices at any one level eliminate categories of terms at a lower level, the systems are not ordered with respect to each other: they are considered to be operated simultaneously, much as the movement of voices in a canon is ordered by reference to the preceding melody of that voice, but simultaneous production of the parts produces chordal polyphony. The syllabus designer using this type of grammar will not, therefore, find linguistic arguments for sequencing exposure to structures; rather, since there is no built-in evaluation metric to give

a rating of simplicity, he will need to find principles from other disciplines, e.g., from psychology, for sequencing systematic exposure to the various systems of the language. One such principle may be a motivational one: the order in which the systems are presented to the student might be based on his pre-existing needs. It is clear that systems cannot be exposed to the student in the same way that is used to be thought that structures could be: The very first utterance by the student will have "polyphonic" structure, and so, in this context, an order of exposure is an order in which different systems are explored and analysed by and for the student.

The previous brief discussion of various linguistic contributions to the problem of sequencing was intended to imply that those contributions are severely limited in scope, at least in comparison with the exaggerated claims current in the 1950's and early 1960's.

It would now be appropriate to examine an example of a structural sequence designed for teaching a part of English grammar to students in a beginner's course, bearing in mind both the linguistic contribution just outlined and the psychological contribution to be discussed subsequently. This particular example is from a structurally and situationally graded textbook and teaches the form and several uses of the English simple present tense. The course writer's objective is to introduce the grammatical patterns "into each text in an interrelated sequence so that the new patterns can be constantly inferred from those previously learnt" (Alexander, L.G., Target English, Teachers Book 1). Thus, ordering of the language examples is planned so that it is progressive in the sense that presentation of an item or pattern is assumed to benefit from what has gone before, and to pave the way for what is to follow. Also, examples are graded in the sense that simple sentences precede conjoined sentences, which precede subjoined sentences, and basic time reference precedes complicated tense forms such as the pluperfect. The example below is from Look, Listen and Learn by L.G. Alexander (Longmans, 1968), which happens to be a very thoroughly worked out syllabus, but similar assumptions hold in, and similar points can be made about, other initial courses such as Broughton (1968), Lee (1968), Abbs and Woolrich (1967). In this case, we take up the story at the point of initial drilling in the present continuous form:

Year 1, Unit 34 Present continuous I'm lighting a fire

In the next four units, this form is drilled in a variety of contexts: with wh-questions, locative and directional

prepositional phrases, in contrast with can + infinitive (introduced earlier, in unit 29), with phrasal verbs (unit 32). The next grammatical point is

Unit 39 Attributive use of participle:
There is a man standing near our car
I can see a man standing near our car

The pattern "there is/are + location" has already been practised in units 24 and 26, and simple "there is" in 13. The new element here is using the participle in attributive position, or as part of a (deleted) relative clause. There now follows a long sequence on quantifiers: some/any/one + article/ partitive phrases/ much, many/little few/a lot of, etc., using only copula and can + infinitive. It is introduced by

Unit 40 There isn't any coffee.

the intention being to establish the connection with the preceding item by the use of "there".

After the quantification sequence, a move towards a new tense form is made by introducing expressions of desire (want) and preference (like), and their negatives with don't (which was first introduced in 29 in negative commands, presumably motivated partly by classroom needs). The advantage of this procedure is presumably that it fits easily with the vocabulary (commodities and foods) that was used with the quantifiers, and that these new words are never or rarely used with any of the three verb forms, copula, can, and +ing, so far introduced, and that therefore there is no question of the teacher using them contrastively. Thus in
Unit 46 want and like with don't negatives and do-question forms are introduced, with the quantifiers and the vocabulary from the previous units.
Unit 47 introduces the 3rd person form with +'s with want, like, and also does, with the quantifiers and the vocabulary from the previous units.
Unit 49 introduces want + to + infinitive. This pattern is not used for like, presumably as it might invite undesirable difficulties in the contrast like to watch and like watching. At this point the scene is set for the introduction of further verbs in the present simple - come, live, speak.
Unit 50 I come from England/ He lives in London/ She speaks English. This fulfils the possible classroom need for personal questions and statements of nationality, habitation, and mother tongue, and is presumably also supposed to prepare the ground

for an understanding of the use of the simple form to express relatively permanent characteristics or properties. By this time the forms and one use of the present simple with each of two classes of verbs have been presented, but no contrast has been established with the present continuous forms. In fact the last present continuous form used in the course was in Unit 45: she is helping her, which is left undrilled, and only used by the teacher. The contrast between habitual and exceptional action is prepared by a sequence which initially abandons the simple forms and goes back to the copula:

Unit 51 copula + frequency adverbs

Unit 52 weather expressions, seasons, and months of the year, introducing ordinal numbers (It's always warm in the first month)

After this preparation, frequency adverbs are used with

Unit 54 verbal weather expressions: snows, rains, etc. (e.g. It always snows in January). Regularity expressions such as every day, usually, etc. are now introduced, and finally the contrast is drilled in

Unit 56 They usually go to school every day, but today they are going to the park.

This example of a particularly closely knit instructional sequence serves to show how precisely exposure to the language can be systematised in order to "shape up" the use of certain forms in certain meanings. Several characteristics of this learning plan are worthy of note.

(1) The transitions between units are sometimes quite obvious, as when one unit practices do forms and the next all the third person forms, and at other times abrupt, though motivated by the long term learning plan, as when the present simple with full verbs is seemingly left behind and the copula reintroduced, with frequency adverbs.

(2) The method assumes that the students' own verbalisings will be strictly controlled, and restricted to the patterns exposed to them. The possibility that a student will try, for example, to form want and like in the present continuous is an embarrassment to the teacher and the student's time has to be occupied in such a way as to prevent such errors arising. At the relevant point in the text no reason is expounded, nor clue given, as to why these two verbs are different from, e.g. living, going, lighting, and posting, except that they are different and this must be learnt.

Several recent writers on syllabus design have pointed out that the order of presentation of language examples may not be as important as was once thought. Howatt (1974 section 3:1) argues that sequencing, or grading, of presentation, is of only limited help to the learner learning what he calls "diffuse concepts", i.e. concepts such as article-use in English, where the relevant rules for the use of a, the, or nothing are difficult to state concisely. The difficulty with this pessimistic view is that it assumes that areas of grammar that are diffuse will remain so. Investigations into what Halliday calls the system of "specification" have revealed some of the relations between article use, quantifiers and defining relative clauses, and this linguistic information may suggest orderings of language examples for English which will be optimal for an understanding of the basic distinctions English employs.

S.P. Corder has pointed out (1973 Chap.12) that in many cases "difficulty" is not the result of the complexity or inaccessibility of the teaching point itself, but is an artefact of the syllabus. That is, the sequence which is carefully designed to expose the language to the learner and "shape him up" step by step in a similar way to the example above, may paradoxically cause difficulty rather than remove it. For example, it is customary to begin a classroom course with the language of demonstration:

This is John

That's a book

It's a desk  etc.

All of the courses mentioned above do this. The reason is clear: It's not that these items are claimed to be linguistically simple, for they are not (for example, students are being exposed to the English expressions of deixis, e.g. proximity, class membership, the distinction between proper and common nouns, simultaneously), but that a convenient way into the language is naming objects in the classroom. In the short term, this allows what + inversion questions to follow quickly and thus the learners can be using dialogues in the first few lessons, which is motivationally positive. But in the long term, considerable confusion may be caused when further distinctions in the language of demonstration, definiteness, and class inclusion are presented. George (1971) points out that many children fail to learn the distinction between

This is a book

and This is Sita

that is, the use of "a" to indicate a member of the class "book" and the lack of it before a proper name. Similar errors might arise from the excerpt from Look, Listen and Learn quoted above. After introducing "They are going to the park", as the present continuous of "go", a few units later the first way of referring to the future is introduced, which, in common with other courses (e.g. Abbs and Woolrich, Lee) is the "future of planning" with

I am going to V

Such an order fulfils the demands of a "logical order" where each item appears to grow out of the previous ones and prepare for the next, but the risk of failing to convince the students of the distinction to be made seems great.

Corder (ibid.) draws a distinction between the contributions of linguistics and psychology to syllabus planning in terms of the distinction current in educational studies between the product and the process of learning, i.e., between descriptions of the product, i.e. the target language, provided by linguistics, and descriptions of the process, i.e., the strategies and stages of acquisition, provided by psychology. Strictly speaking, the product of the learning process usually falls short of the target language described by the linguists, and is nowadays frequently referred to as the "interlanguage" after Selinker (1972). Also, psychologists may now wish to claim that a description of the target language that has "explanatory adequacy" as defined by Chomsky (1965) would contain psychological information as well as linguistic information, such as that quoted above on the issue of complexity. But leaving that aside, it is obvious that the weight of available information is about the product, and there is as yet very little information about the process. There are four classes of psychological information available, which arise from four current areas of research. They are:

(a) studies of native language acquisition
(b) studies of learning processes in general
(c) studies of errors made by second language learners
(d) studies of natural sequences of second language acquisition

One might wish to add

(e) studies of so-called "presage" variables - aptitude, learning styles, etc.
(f) studies of interaction in second language classrooms.

There is now a considerable literature (Cook, 1969) on the possible analogy between processes discovered in the native language acquisition situation and those of the second language situation. ((a) above). Any such parallels must be treated with considerable caution as, by and large, the circumstances of the two occasions of language acquisition are very different. However, in the same vein as Bever's suggestions for perceptual strategies used by children in making sense of the first language input (1970), there have been suggestions from C. Chomsky (1969), Cromer (1974), Clark (1973) and others that children acquiring various categories of expressions in their native tongue do so by means of a process of differentiation of strategies. For example, C. Chomsky has shown that children of primary school age have difficulty with certain constructions after the verbs promise, want, and ask. Children who can interpret correctly

Donald wants Bozo to lie down

cannot necessarily interpret

Donald promises Bozo to lie down.

The difficulty here arises from a strategy, or an assumption, that Noun + Verb sequences are interpretable as Actor + Action sequences, which is true for complements after 'want' but has to be abandoned after 'promise'. (Jacobs and Rosenbaum (1968) referred to this as the "Minimal Distance Principle".) The verb 'ask' is not correctly interpreted until even later, presumably because it is inconsistent and can take both constructions:

Donald asks Bozo to lie down

Donald asks Bozo what to do

It is sometimes argued that these difficulties are the result of the child's not having reached an adult stage of cognitive development, and that the average second language learner, having reached such a stage, would not be affected by them. If it were found, however, that similar errors were made by $L_2$ learners, which seems quite possible, then perhaps $L_2$ learners faced with the confusing prospect of interpreting

a new language fall back on the "infantile" strategy of assuming that N + V sequences are Actor + action.

In another area of grammar, Cromer (1974) and Clark (1973) have noted that the child's expression of time relations in the earlier stages is in the chronological order of the original events, and that some time later, when the child has acquired the thematic order of English, with theme, or "given" information, followed by theme, or "new" information (Halliday, 1970) the reverse of the event order begins to appear. As a corollary of this expansion of the child's possibilities of expression, the time conjunctions 'before' and 'after' are not used correctly by the child until quite late - namely, until he has mastered thematic ordering. This is another example of a principle of the sequence of first language acquisition which may also occur in second language acquisition, but which has not been looked for so far. Again, it may be that faced with the $L_2$ task, the learner "regresses" to an "infantile" strategy, and assumes that event order = expressed order in the foreign language, despite the fact that he is a fluent speaker of his own language, where that assumption probably does not hold. As with so many extrapolations from the $L_1$ acquisition literature, neither of these hypotheses has any corroborative evidence from the $L_2$ situation yet, but the possibility that certain aspects of the sequence of $L_1$ acquisition may reappear in $L_2$ acquisition is an important one. Cook (1973) has shown that both foreign adults and native children appear to go through the same stages in acquiring the "deep structure" distinction between sentences like

the wolf is glad to bite

and the wolf is tasty to bite.

which may act as some support for the hypothesis. The published courses mentioned earlier all leave conjoined and subjoined sentences like those with before and after until, at the earliest, the third year, or advanced work. For example the problem of event order appears in drills with 'if':

If he comes, we'll go to the cinema

We'll go to the cinema if he comes.

Validation of this possible analogy, and thus its effect on syllabus planning will have to wait upon more experimentation with $L_2$ learners.

This is not the place to review (b) (page 8), studies of learning processes in general, except to introduce the notion (Mager, 1961), (Dakin, 1973) of an "internal syllabus". The idea that a learning sequence can be planned by the instructor, from the outside, is an inheritance from the behaviourist approach to learning. The systematic sequence of instruction illustrated on pages 5 and 6 derives in principle from the technique of operant conditioning - behaviour shaping - propounded by Skinner. Increasing recognition of the active participation of the learner in testing hypotheses (Wason and Johnson-Laird, 1972 Chap.16), relating tested items and non-tested items (Frase, 1970), etc., resulted in the idea that the optimally efficient order of acquisition of the elements of the "body of knowledge" (Bruner, 1964) may be determined by the learner himself, and observed in his interaction with the new knowledge.

Several recent writers (e.g. Corder, Selinker, Richards) have drawn attention to the "significance of learners' errors", to use Corder's phrase. The significance referred to is that the errors may be considered evidence for the internal syllabus. Corder (1967) supposed that by some process of collection and analysis of large numbers of errors and comparison of the error pattern with the input - the exposure to the $L_2$ - an optimally efficient learning sequence could be extracted, which would be in a real sense "learner-generated". There is a strong analogy between this process and that suggested by Skinner (1961) for the determination of order and step size for programmed materials. That is, both Skinner and Corder advocated empirical determination of these variables, in the interests of minimising error. The procedure is empirical in the sense that the programme, or syllabus, can only reach its final form after testing and examination of the error pattern produced, and is therefore an advance on the notion of a syllabus determined strictly from a description of the target language alone. Where Corder differs from the Skinnerian approach is the necessity he sees to infer from the error pattern, the process of learning. Skinner, as is well known, eschewed any such theorising. (1959). This inferential approach has produced many useful studies (Richards, 1971, George 1971 - see Richards,1974) but as yet the "learner-generated syllabus seems as far off as ever.

There is an alternative, or perhaps complementary approach, in which the order in which students acquire elements of the language is established by taking a criterion

of success rather than failure. H. Dulay and M. Burt (1974) have investigated the acquisition of several common functors of English by preparing a set of pictures and having children learning English as their $L_2$ describe the pictures, prompted by various questions, recording what they say. It is considered that a learner (in their case children, but it has been repeated for adults by Bailey, Madden and Krashen 1974) has acquired the functor when he inserts is correctly on 90% of the occasions where an adult native speaker would use it given the sentence he has launched himself into. Such occasions are called "obligatory", following Brown (1973) who invented the technique in his research on $L_1$ acquisition. They have found that children learning English as their $L_2$ in different parts of New York acquire the functors in approximately the same order whether they have Spanish or Chinese as their mother tongue, and irrespective of the course books their teachers use. The functors they have investigated are given here in the order found by Brown (1973) to be the "natural sequence" for the three American children acquiring English as their native language that his group has studied.

-ing

plural -s

irregular Past tense

Possessive 's

Article a/the

Regular Past

3rd singular -s

copular is, 's

auxiliary is, 's

There are many interesting aspects of this list, not least being that the -ing form (present participle) is the earliest of this subset (Brown himself investigated five more), while the auxiliary, usually taught before it, comes last. But points arising from this list are probably irrelevant to the $L_2$ situation since Dulay and Burt found that while the Spanish and Chinese learners appeared to agree among themselves, they did not agree with Brown's list. Dulay and Burt (1974) derived the following order of acquisition. They used the "tree method" of analysis, which essentially only allows the statement "x preceded y" if the reverse occurred, i.e., y preceding x, for not more than 5% of the subjects who acquired both x and y.

This method of handling the data produced loose hierarchies of elements, where some members of the hierarchy are not ordered with respect to each other, thus forming groups, and other members are, according to the criterion given above, thus forming sequences. This statistical approach to grouping and sequencing produced the following distribution for the Spanish and Chinese children combined (the children ranged from age nine to eleven):

Group I  Pronoun case  I - me

Group II  Copula  Progressive -ing  Article a, the

Auxiliary  Plural

Group III  Possessive's  Past Regular  Past Irregular  3rd person -s

Long Plural

(Dulay and Burt, 1974, fig.3. The arrows indicate ordered pairs within groups.)

This "acquisition hierarchy" bears no relationship to Brown's $L_1$ order quoted on page 11. Consequently neither Brown's structural complexity explanation, based on the cumulative derivational complexity metric, nor his semantic complexity explanation, based on the number of major meanings per functor, can explain the $L_2$ data. Dulay and Burt themselves do not offer any theory capable of explaining their data; as yet unspecified processes of "differentiation of function" and "cognitive organisation" are referred to as objects for further research. However they claim that this type of empirical evidence is the starting point for specification of "the nature of language acquisition hierarchies". For present purposes, it only needs to be emphasized that a teaching syllabus which only considers linguistic descriptions of the target language runs the potentially serious, and time-wasting risk of thwarting and running counter to the "natural strategies" of the $L_2$ learner, strategies whose existence, but also obscurity, are substantiated by Dulay and Burt's evidence.

The functors investigated by Dulay and Burt are exposed to students in yet other orders by the courses mentioned earlier. The Dolphin course (Lee) and Look, Listen and Learn (Alexander) use the following sequences:

| Dolphin | Look, listen and learn |
|---|---|
| Copula, Article a | Copula, Article the |
| pronoun case | pronoun case |
| article the | article a/an |
| short and long plurals | short plural |
| Auxiliary and -ing form | auxiliary and -ing form |
| 3rd singular -s | long plurals |
| past regular, irregular | 3rd singular -s |
| | regular past |
| | irregular past |

It is of course artificial to extract these functors from their allotted contexts in the courses, because in both courses at least a year is required to reach expressions of simple past time, and a great deal of different grammar items occurs between the various functors listed here. However, the two orders can be seen to agree with each other at the beginning and the end and not greatly in the middle; neither could be said to foreshadow Dulay and Burt's results. Of course, it would be premature to suggest that courses should now be ordered to accord with results like those from Dulay and Burt, however on this specific area, the empirical results suggest, for example, that expressions of past time, which are required earlier than "long plurals", be taught earlier than these latter, and not later as in the courses quoted, possibly because time expressions may be more important and useful to the learner than yet another way of expressing plurality.

Dulay and Burt ended their paper with a call for studies of acquisition of many more areas of grammar. An area in which results would be of particular value to the course constructor is verb tense forms, because these form the backbone of most syllabuses. There is some agreement between published courses on the order of exposure of copula, present continuous, present simple, and past simple forms, but very little correlation in any other tense forms, e.g. modals, past continuous, future, present perfect, etc. It is not clear whether a "natural sequence" can be expected across this very large area of English grammar, and it may well not be appropriate to look for sequences of items anyway, but rather for sequences of acquisition of notions of time orientation, time reference, and aspect, expressible by a

number of items. In whatever form, however, the data are cast, such empirical information would be of great value.

In conclusion, it has not been possible to argue that empirical psychological information can replace linguistic description in making decisions about sequencing, and it would be nonsensical to try. The argument has been put forward that psychological information about processes and strategies of $L_1$ language performance and particularly $L_2$ acquisition are at least equally as important as linguistic description, at this stage of course preparation. However, it is all too clear that the amount that is known about the processes and strategies is inadequate to answer the questions the course writer may legitimately put. However, the questions raised by the problems of course writing may yet help to give direction to the basic research.

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Revolutionary Epistemics and Language Learning

J.T. Roberts

## Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to initiate discussion on the implications for institutional language teaching and learning of the view held by certain educational technologists[1] that the educational process as a whole in this and other developed countries today is ill-conceived and should be changed. The justification for this line of enquiry is that the way language teaching and learning proceed must reflect in some measure the total educational process determined or sustained by educational institutions and ultimately by society at large. If the educational process as a whole is questioned, then it is worth trying to establish to what extent that process as it is reflected in language teaching and learning is also questionable, what can be done, if necessary, to improve matters, and, since there are already some signs of change, welcome or not, how things are likely to evolve anyway.

## Revolutionary Epistemics

For some time now, educational technology has been showing signs of undergoing a revolution, which may be characterised by saying that certain educational technologists are becoming increasingly concerned with the question of the human values underlying and inspiring education and are devoting their energies to the suppression of some of the existing values and the cultivation of others. This is in a sense a strange development, since we do not typically equate the work of a technologist with that of a philosopher or reformer, but expect a technology to perfect and implement procedures and techniques in accordance with what the fundamental sciences have shown to be feasible and with what society at large deems desirable[2]. In this instance, the technology, like the worm, has turned, and is telling society what is desirable. The reason for this probably has to do with the fact that educational technology is by virtue of its very nature in a good position to realise precisely what society or its policy-determining agencies are asking it to do. In the first place, a technology which is largely concerned, as 'traditional' educational technology is or was, with 'efficient message design' and the gadgetry for implementing it, has to begin by analysing the message it is supposed to convey, and this renders the message explicit and available to critical scrutiny. In the second place, educational technology,

unlike many other technologies, has to take an uncomfortably immediate account of its human 'recipients' or 'sufferers', and in this situation some educational technologists have come to see their skill as one which has hitherto been applied not so much for the purpose of edifying the human learner as for the purpose of manipulating him into conformity[3]. Presumably, no educational technologist, revolutionary or otherwise, would care to maintain that education is the only medium for manipulating people, just as no educational technologist would claim that education, if appropriately conducted, can on its own ensure intellectual independence and the rebuttal of encroachments on personal liberty or can on its own solve all of the world's problems. The claim is rather that education, as one of society's most powerful media, nevertheless does, and in a modified form should continue to, exercise a profound enough influence on the people exposed to it to bring about significant changes in their attitudes and behaviour. So far, this claim is trivial, since it is doubtful whether society, whatever its values, would invest enormous sums of money into an education system which was not felt to bring about attitudinal and behavioural changes, or at least confirm or reinforce certain attitudes and behaviours. It becomes more interesting from a technical point of view, however, in the light of the contention that it is not the minutiae of syllabuses which procure changes of heart and mind, but the whole system of what Meredith (1975) has called 'epistemics'. This term means to him both the problem of how different persons can share each other's knowledge and the activity of transmitting knowledge in interpersonal communication. When the revolutionary educational technologist talks of manipulating people into conformity, he is, then, talking of the established use in educational institutions of what Meredith labels 'traditional epistemics', a system whose 'motto' Meredith has written for it, as follows:

> Now you must know
> That this is so.

With this motto, Meredith epitomises the educational process which demands that the teacher be the fount and dispenser of wisdom, that learners be the recipients of the teacher's knowledge, that the content of education consist of 'facts', and that examinations seek to establish how many of the 'facts' on the syllabus have been absorbed and how well they have been absorbed. Such

a system values teaching and the curriculum above learning and the problems of the individual in interpreting and coming to terms with the world, and is held by the revolutionary educational technologists not to be capable of even beginning to prepare young people for coping with the problems the world faces today. It is not simply a question of changing the sort of 'saber-tooth curriculum' of Harold Benjamin's allegory (1971) to a more up-to-date 'net-making, antelope-snaring and bear-killing curriculum' but a question of revising radically the whole system of epistemics.

A very clear statement of the most compelling non-moral reasons for a drastic reappraisal of the educational process is to be found in Postman and Weingartner's Teaching as a Subversive Activity. As they point out, our major problem in coming to terms with our environment today is the speed of change in almost every area of life one can think of, and not simply the speed of change, but the fact that the process of change initiated by events such as the invention of the printing press and the discovery of the New World has itself recently been subject to disquieting change. Somewhere in recent history, "Change changed". That is to say that the quantitative change in change in the technological field became so enormous that it could only be regarded as a qualitative change, commonly referred to as the 'knowledge explosion'. As a consequence of technological change, everyday life also changes, and if change seems rapid now, we have to remember that the type of change taking place since the point at which change changed progresses geometrically rather than arithmetically. But according to Postman and Weingartner, we have already "reached the stage where change occurs so rapidly that each of us in the course of our lives has continuously to work out a set of values, beliefs and patterns of behaviour that are viable, or seem viable, to each of us personally. And just when we have identified a workable system, it turns out to be irrelevant because so much has changed while we were doing it." Postman and Weingartner, in common with other revolutionary educational technologists, contend that in this situation, the only type of education which has any hope of being suitable both as a preparation for life and as part of it, is an education which sets out to encourage the process of learning how to learn. They see this process, moreover, as being crucially dependent on

the development of the skill of formulating intelligent questions, and of the courage to put them, once formulated, however embarrassing they may prove to people with vested interests. The skill of posing the right questions is regarded not simply as an educational benefit, but also as an essential strategy for defence against manipulation by bureaucracies and the organisations in control of the mass media. Unless we can pose the right questions, we cannot begin to analyse the assumptions underlying the messages with which the official media assail us and with which bureaucracies would manipulate us, any more than we can hope to establish the implications for our future of what is being done in, say, the field of virus or genetics research.

Coupled with these assumptions is the conviction that, considerations such as the moral repugnance of manipulation and the problem of world survival apart, learning rather than teaching is the essential activity of the teaching-learning situation, and that teaching is only of value insofar as it is directly facilitative of learning (c.f., for example Cherry, 1975). This conviction is not altogether a new one, but its wider implications do not yet seem to be appreciated, judging by the way education is still organised in the majority of institutions.

So to summarise, the argument of the revolutionary educational technologists is this: Look at education today and you will observe that, by and large it is geared to a static society, whereas the one in which we live is dynamic and changing. This is not to say that syllabuses are not altered to take account of new facts brought to light by research, or that schools do not use the latest devices, such as CCTV and language laboratories, in an endeavour to make the communication of the educational 'message' more effective and its reception more attractive. But such modifications are insignificant, when one considers that, the medium being the message, the educational 'message' is out-of-date because the whole medium of education is out-of-date. And this message, broadcast via a uni-directional channel of communication, from teacher to learner, is: "Learn what we tell you, and you'll be all right, because we are your elders and betters, and we know what's good for you".

To return now to my remarks about the concern of the revolutionary educational technologists for human value, the values they want to promote against the whole established system are: the freedom, indeed the right, to ask questions about the world, the right to be given help in formulating and becoming skilled in asking questions about the world, and the freedom and right to learn how to learn rather than just how to absorb taxonomies of facts which in any case will be obsolete before very long. In other words, they want to supplant 'traditional epistemics' with what Meredith calls 'revolutionary epistemics', whose motto is:

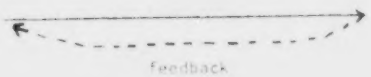
> If you can see what I can see
> Then perhaps we can agree.

Actually, this motto which Meredith wrote in a flight of fancy is not ideal, because it can still be said to smack of a basic authoritarianism which sets out to seduce the mind of the learner rather than take it by force. However, I think we can assume that it is not meant to suggest anything of the sort, but to stress the idea that the learner has the right to disagree.

Without wishing to imply that all their views are identical, an even more graphic way of stating what Meredith and other revolutionaries are getting at has been achieved by Rowntree (1975), in whose eyes western education today, far from representing a system of 'co-mmunication', is a system of 'munication', with the 'nunicative' process going in the direction teacher to learner.

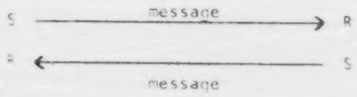
Rowntree's model of nunicative communication, if that is not a contradiction in terms, is a model in which S, the sender (and the teacher), sends out a message to R, the receiver (and the student). Feedback from R to S is allowed for, but is represented by a broken line, to signify that it is a superficial type of feedback, intended mainly as a check on how well the S's message has been received. (See Fig. 1.

Fig. 1.



So while the system of 'traditional epistemics' does allow for feedback in the direction R to S, that is, student to teacher, and while teachers are trained to encourage it, even to the point of handing out questionnaires at the end of a course inviting students to say either "Message wasn't received very well, I'm afraid", or "Message received loud and clear, thanks; all your dictums, advice and pearls of wisdom are enshrined in my lecture-notes", what it does not allow is for the feedback actually to take the form of an autonomous message. If one now looks at Rowntree's second model, one sees a fundamental, though also, paradoxically, quite simple, change, which alters the whole nature of student - teacher interaction, and represents the beginnings of a system of revolutionary epistemics. (See Fig. 2).

Fig. 2.




This time the sender of a message is also a receiver, and vice-versa, and it does not really matter whether the teacher is SR and the learner RS, or the other way round, though as I shall suggest later, this does not necessarily imply a one-to-one correspondence and does not [illegible]

The Implications for Language Teaching and Learning

What, then, are the implications for institutional language teaching and learning of the advocacy of revolutionary epistemics, and, if the revolution wins through, what changes might be expected in this field? It is arguable that the revolution has in fact already begun to make itself felt in language teaching, since unless I am mistaken it is this revolution which inspires Jakobovits and Gordon's The Context of Foreign Language Teaching; to take this book as a critique solely of American education is, I think, only to prove that there is a beam in the British eye. Again, the trend towards individualisation (see, for example, Valette and Disick 1972; Disick 1975) seems commonly to provoke expression of the belief that language teaching is becoming more 'democratic'. This may indeed be true, but as Rowntree remarks in discussing the use of programmed instruction to achieve greater individualisation:

> "Programmed learning is largely responsible for the myth that individualised learning is necessarily student-centred".

In other words, individualisation must not be confused with a breakthrough for revolutionary epistemics if in fact all it amounts to is 'personalised' indoctrination. But subject to this proviso, increasing individualisation is undoubtedly implicated in revolutionary epistemics.

I should now like to examine the implications of the epistemics revolution in five specific areas, namely:

1. Aims and Motivation
2. Methods
3. Learning how to Learn
4. The Student - Teacher Relationship
5. The Teaching - Learning Environment

Aims and Motivation

To deal first with aims and motivation, I wish to conflate them because it seems to me that in a genuinely co-mmunicative situation, the intentions of the teacher or course-constructor should harmonise with the interests and aspirations of the learner. In most educational institutions, such a situation is at present unlikely, if not unthinkable, primarily because it is considered that the right aims for any given group of learners are made known as if by [illegible] examiners. Indeed, it is so much taken for granted that teachers and examiners know the right aims for learners that these teachers and examiners are not usually even constrained to publish the aims of their courses and syllabuses, with the result that there can be neither public scrutiny nor discussion of aims. At the same time, the content of a course is often felt in some mysterious way to be sacrosanct, almost to possess an autonomous existence of its own which needs no more explanation or justification than the existence of a living being. This state of affairs, in the light of revolutionary epistemics, can only be viewed as a gross and cynical act of what Rowntree has called 'munication'.

One possible strategy for remedying this situation would obviously lie in the offering of a wide range of courses with differing aims, for example, an elementary reading knowledge of German as against oral German for travel requirements, and so on, and this strategy is already advocated in one form or another by, for example, Disick (1975). It is not without problems or limitations, however. A major problem is that if responsibility for the choice

of particular courses with particular aims were simply handed over to learners, who had to pick from a list or prospectus, the inexperienced among them might have little or no idea of what they wanted, if anything at all. Again, if courses with more instrumental aims, such as learning how to write business-letters in French, were included, the younger learner might feel forced into trying to make difficult decisions about his future, and his anxiety, though probably quite unfounded, would be none the less real. There is also a more subtle problem, inherent in any system, autocratic or democratic, and this is that whereas the aims of a course remain static, the motivational state of the learner fluctuates. This means that even if, in a given case, the aims of a course and the motivation of a learner coincide at the outset, the same not be true at a later stage. The course will do something to or for the learner, and external factors in his life can change. But at present, the only motivational state which seems to receive any official attention is the zero or minus motivational state, which usually incurs either threats or goading or else resignation to the extent that the learner is invited to drop out or is not entered for the school examinations.

One answer to the problem of the coincidence or non-coincidence of aims and motivation which has been proposed by revolutionary educational technologists, for example, Postman and Weingartner, starts with the proposition that a pre-determined course-content is illegitimate, because the only true content of a course lies in the discussion between pupil and teacher, so that, if the discussion is genuinely co-mmunicative and the student's contribution is accorded the status of a message, it cannot be foreseen. Consequently, the issue of aims is a red-herring anyway, because the only given aims will be to promote learning-orientated discussion. Outrageous as this proposition might seem in the context of foreign language learning, one could nevertheless well imagine, especially where younger and less specialised learners are concerned, that language courses need not begin on the first page of a textbook or with an introduction to the sounds of language X, but with a leisurely discussion of everything and anything relevant to language learning, from the question as to how people learn languages to

the customs of foreign societies. The classroom might even contain a small library of books on such matters, which students are encouraged to take home and read, and ask questions about. During the discussion, the teacher or the students could raise issues such as the reasons for which we learn foreign languages, and the teacher could try to help students find and articulate whatever motivations they might have. The proposal for this sort of leisurely preparation, and by 'leisurely' I mean a period of several weeks to several months, would not, incidentally, be vastly different in spirit from a suggestion made by Professor E. Hawkins in a seminar recently conducted at the University of Essex[5] that prior to courses in specific languages, a more general course in Language should be offered. But I see the type of discussion I am proposing as being more wide-ranging than Language, and including, for example, the institutions and literatures of foreign societies, and I also envisage the strategy I am suggesting as leading to a collective formulation of aims for language-learning proper, though a 'collective formulation' only in the sense that everyone joins in discussion, not in the sense that all will eventually agree on and pursue the same aims. In this way, two or three different groups of learners might be found to collect together round different aims, which, I am assuming, will be suitably realistic in the time available, as a result of the prior discussions, in which the teacher will act as specialist adviser. There might, of course, be one severe embarrassment in all this, and that is the discovery of students who want to drop out from the start. If this were a student's message, it would have to be treated seriously. A pragmatic view, let alone a revolutionary one, would be that not to force the issue could save much of the heartache and soul-searching that goes on at present over failure, and at that, failure which the system guarantees.

I am not assuming, incidentally, that there are no circumstances in which a diversity of aims could not be allowed. Obviously, allowing for such diversity becomes more difficult as the learner becomes more advanced. Again, where specialist University courses are concerned, I think it is legitimate to maintain that it is more a question of inviting students to share, by conscious choice, certain academic interests furthered outside the classroom

through scholarship and research than of offering to teach what one thinks, or students think, people ought to know, in some more general sense. But the advanced learner is, of course, in a position to make his own choices, and it would be a minimum courtesy towards him if educational institutions would state as precisely as possible what the aims of their language courses are, rather than just giving list of books and timetabling details.

Beyond these few remarks, I would not wish to propose any ready-made solutions to the problem of aims and motivation. The issues are obviously enormously complex, and will take a long time to analyse in detail. However, I think it is a clear implication of revolutionary epistemics that aims and student motivation must be considered together as an inseparable unit and that we should think less in terms of what one has <u>not</u> to know in and about a foreign language and more in terms of what the learner <u>wants</u> to know and what he wants the language for.

<u>Methods</u>

I should like to contend that in the light of revolutionary epistemics, language teaching methodologies as we traditionally know them are weapons of mediation. This is less of an intrinsic feature than a feature they acquire in application. They acquire it because, by and large, they are designed for the fulfilment of certain aims valued by teachers or course-designers, and whether consciously used to these ends or not, they shape the path of learning accordingly. But they also possess another interesting feature, and this is that they reflect a whole educational ethos as much as they reflect assumptions about the way in which language learning proceeds. In a sense, this is obvious, but we tend to talk about them almost all the time as though they were nothing but the technological by-products of knowledge about language learning at various stages in history. However, it should be no surprise that the grammar-translation method, for example, was most rigidly applied at a time when rote-learning was predominant. It is also no surprise that the Direct Method revolution was abortive in the educational climate of the nineteenth century. Here was a method which demanded a certain amount of co-mmunication, and co-mmunication could easily lead to the sharing of jokes, and hence to laughter and hence, so it was thought, to unruliness and lack of respect for authority. Of course, the aims of the Direct Method were not

particularly valued by society, anyway, ironically enough because society did not seem keen on the idea of co-mmunication either. Again, from the kind of discussion surrounding the audio-lingual method, one might think that language-teachers had taken out a patent on programmed instruction. Now, with the Silent Way, it may be too easy to overlook the fact that in some schools, blue and green make five. Indeed, one is tempted to ask whether methodologies owe much at all to specific knowledge about language learning, or, more embarrassingly, what independent status knowledge about language teaching has achieved.

One of the tasks of the applied linguist must be to carry out research into the processes of language learning, and, where appropriate, to draw conclusions for classroom strategy, irrespective of his educo-political outlook. At least, that sounds a nice theoretical statement, dignifying the applied linguist with the status of some 'purer' sort of scientist. Actually, in view of my foregoing remarks, I doubt whether it is in the least possible that in the institutional setting there can be methodologies specific to language teaching in the sense that they can ignore the prevailing educational ethos. For example, if the applied linguist found in his laboratory setting that learners in an experimental group to whom a painful electric shock was administered every half-hour throughout their course learned languages ten times more quickly than the learners in the control group who were spared such a procedure, even under the bad old system of traditional epistemics we have today, this electrifying discovery would have relatively little chance of acceptance as the beginnings of a classroom technique. So when the 'language-experts' talk about the 'special conditions of language learning' in a way which suggests that the conditions to be met are quite different from those needed in other areas of learning, in one sense at least, this talk may be quite irrelevant.

I would like to suggest that the most likely implication of revolutionary epistemics for methods, when thought of in terms of global application, is that they will or should cease to exist in the way we think of them today, and be demoted to techniques in a new methodology which one might call 'learner-centred eclecticism'. This is because in a system which recognises not only that learners wish to learn for different reasons but also that they have different learning strategies, or think they do, whatever processes actually occur in their brains, it would seem appropriate to abandon the search for the supposedly 'perfect' method in favour of a battery of techniques

designed to cope, possibly in many alternative ways, with specific aspects of language learning[6]. To give an example, the audio-lingual method has now fallen into considerable disrepute, attacked on all sides for theoretical and practical reasons. If it had not in the first place been consistently and exclusively imposed on learners as a global method - which it cannot be, since it ignores so many aspects of language learning in a broad sense - it might never have attracted the furious punishment it has received. Dakin (1973) and Jakobovits and Gordon (1974) have shown that there are justifications for pattern practice for example, provided it is suitably contextualised and meaningful, and in this light the audio-lingual method is not to be totally rejected but given different status. Viewed as a technique rather than a global method, it can take its place as one of a range of techniques which suggest themselves as apposite to both teacher and learner at various stages and in various modes of language learning, in relation to various objectives.

If it seems horrifying that eclecticism should be encouraged, and further, that learners, who by and large have no technical knowledge of the problems of language teaching and learning, should help in prescribing techniques for their own use when some of these techniques may seem at variance with the supposed 'known facts' of the language learning process, then the following should be considered: that a learner who feels he is learning through what we regard as totally wrong-headed techniques is undoubtedly still a more effective learner than the one who feels he is learning nothing through what we regard as the right techniques. In other words, the psychological make-up of the learner needs to be respected, and is more likely to be respected in a system which recognises him both as an individual and as a whole person. I have been trying to argue that since, in the view of the revolutionary educational technologists, the prevailing educational system does not respect the integrity of the learner in the fundamental sense of that term, it is, in the same view, a system built upon the wrong assumptions, and given to wrong strategies. In this light, and with reference to my remarks about the psychological make-up of the learner, I contend that making the wrong assumptions at the level of general educational strategies is probably more damaging to language learning than using weird-looking techniques in the right educational climate. In any case, assuming this climate to be the revolutionary one under discussion, techniques can always be tried out,

and changed where they prove ineffective. There is no a priori reason to suppose that learners will not be discriminating as 'consumers' of techniques. So techniques, rather than methods in their usual grandiose sense, seem implied by revolutionary epistemics.

Learning How to Learn

For reasons outlined earlier, the revolutionary educational technologists believe that learning how to learn should be the focal point of all educational activity. It is an interesting question, therefore, and in the context of the present discussion a crucial one, whether foreign language learning has anything to contribute to the process of learning how to learn in general educational terms and whether it can be presented, for its own sake, in an open-ended manner, such that the learner in school or university can, without being discouraged, see his language studies only as the beginning of a life-long apprenticeship. I would in fact contend that unless the answer to both parts of this question is affirmative, then, in the light of revolutionary epistemics, the place of foreign language learning in the mainstream of educational activity is open to serious challenge. It would presumably never face total rejection from education, since even as an access-skill it would serve people who wanted or needed to read foreign publications or fulfil other instrumental objectives, but seen only as an access-skill it would certainly risk complete relegation to further and higher education and its status (particularly outside specialist courses) would be about the same as that of learning to read the mother-tongue - painful while it lasts, and only enriching once completed. In fact, this is the way that foreign language learning is already viewed by many people, and in some cases justifiably; but if it is a justifiable view within the educational context, that is, 'justifiable' in the light of what is actually happening in the foreign language classroom, then there is something radically wrong.

One of the most crippling inheritances of the behaviourist approach to language teaching is the idea, and its popularisation, that language is 'only a skill' and that anyone can learn to speak a language like a parrot, given sufficient time. In fact, there seems to exist a peculiar

set of double standards according to which foreign language learning is nowadays often seen as a mere skill whereas the study of the mothertongue is thought of as a process requiring such effort and cerebration that any serious proposal to abolish English from the school curriculum, on the grounds that pupils already spoke it pretty well, would be tantamount to opening the Gates of Hell and loosing all the demons it contains. The outrage at such a barbarous proposal would be quite justifiable, too, but mainly, if not only, because 'English' is readily understood as an ambiguity, meaning not simply a language, but also a culture, a literature, a medium for promoting analytical and exegetical powers and a platform for discussing life; in short, in the best tradition, a terrain in which intellectual seeds are planted and grown. Something akin to this humanistic conception of English also generally applied at one time to Modern Languages, at least at an advanced level, only unfortunately it involved an elitism and snobbery which did no-one any credit, and at the same time entailed an appalling narrowness where it came to the language per se.

If part of the reason for which foreign language learning in education is in danger of being viewed as a 'mere skill' activity lies in the aftermath of the invasion by the sort of anti-intellectualism implicit in the audio-lingual method, or, rather, its constant, mindless imposition, part of it also lies in the present-day tendency to equate the purpose of foreign language teaching with the single objective of producing students who can speak foreign languages like natives, so that when the students do not do so, even after five or seven years, the mission is deemed a failure. As Jakobovits and Gordon suggest, this is a state of affairs we need to change, and perhaps in a far more sweeping manner than even they propose. To allow a much greater range of 'individualised' objectives and at the same time to adopt a much more tolerant view of what 'foreign language learning' means is a step in the right direction. But perhaps - paradoxically? - it also needs to be combined with something of an 'old-fashioned', scholarly approach to language-learning, albeit 'liberalised' and up-dated in its methods.

Returning, first, to the question as to whether a language can be presented in such a way as to make it possible for the learner to continue his learning of it himself, at a later stage, it is difficult to see how some current methods, globally and exclusively imposed, can make this possible in anything but a superficial manner. Indeed, audio-lingualism, as a case in point, might almost

as well be called the 'secret method'. It is the contrastive linguist who decides what shall be taught, in what order and why. Though he must himself be capable of linguistic analysis, this is not a skill he passes on directly to the learner. By the time his course is prepared, a conscious understanding of the way the language 'ticks' will not only be very difficult to gain from the course, but will, as a matter of principle, be positively discouraged by the teacher using the course 'correctly'. In fact, the 'correct' use of the course by the teacher is much more disastrous than the course-materials themselves, since in a sense these may be neither more not less 'opaque' than a passage of authentic speech or writing, which carries no notes on its grammar or stylistic features - though it does, of course, usually point out its own 'context'. The deliberate blocking of the learner's effort to gain an intellectual grasp of the language, however, is the antithesis of revolutionary epistemics and the epitome of cynical manipulation. Just such questions as language learners might ask in tackling an audio-lingual course, or a passage of authentic speech, could, under a different paradigm, represent the beginnings of a genuine interest in language and languages as well as the first step towards acquiring one's own 'taxonomic' methods for application not only to the language immediately at issue, but others also. Such questions could, in addition, lead on to acquiring skill in the proper use of dictionaries and grammars and other sources of knowledge, such as native informants, and to learning to distrust all of them. Teaching phonetic script in school has been done before (see, for example, Harding, 1967), though as part of a global method no more successful than any other, and should not be impossible, where pupils are really interested in attempting to capture the sounds of a language; that it may at present seem unimaginable, like so much else, is only an index of the illiberality of the epistemic system.

But again, at a time when we are perhaps beginning to take a new interest in the structure of language, it would be a pity if this were to become such an obsession that as a result, we forgot that language is a vehicle for thoughts and ideas and itself one of the most subtle tools of manipulation. From this point of view, it is probably not too reckless to state as a generalisation that school language courses, even at the most advanced level, are sterile. The academic self-aggrandizement of teachers encouraged by the French explication de texte is well-known, but something similar to the explication de texte, carried out in teacher-student discussion on a variety of examples of written and spoken

discourse in different registers might very well prove more stimulating and useful, and preserve much more effectively the relationship between structure and meaning, than the tackling of long set texts which in any case, under the present system, are often of no interest or relevance to anyone but the examiner and which, because of their difficulty, frequently end up being so slavishly translated that any interest they might have held for the learner is banished. With shorter texts, on the other hand, one might successfully engage in, say, the detection of demagogy and the pulling apart of propaganda, and encourage the student from an early stage to be as critical of texts in foreign languages as one would like him to be of those in his own. One might also begin with popular magazines and advertisements rather than with extracts from 'great literature'.

Whatever activities might be engaged in given a more liberal, 'open-ended' approach, where school in particular is concerned, it would seem a first priority to abandon any 'modern' notion that there is a compulsion to produce near native-speakers, or even very fluent speakers, and to adopt instead the idea that anything which can be done to help the learner to learn how to learn, in whatever way is meaningful to him, is not only 'better epistemics' but is likely to be of greater and longer-lasting value. If the learner does happen to want to become fluent as quickly as possible, he should of course be given every assistance, but this assistance should be designed to help him help himself and to open the path to further learning, so that he can continue along it independently when the time comes.

Whether foreign language learning has anything to contribute to education in a general sense depends only on the way foreign language teaching is construed. If this teaching does not set artificial limits to the activities of the classroom, is not neurotic about syllabuses to be got through, does not view examinations as the indices of teaching and learning and does not rule certain types of question out-of-order but seeks to develop them, wherever they may lead, then if the foreign language learning associated with such teaching is not educational, nothing is. That 'boundaries' between 'subjects' must be sacrificed, along with vested interests, is, however, obvious if a

complete change in the epistemic system is to be achieved. But the educational benefits could be enormous if they led, for example, towards such developments as the merging of $L_1$ and $L_2$ teaching at school level. It is probably true at present, for example, that foreign language teachers are by and large better equipped than their English-teaching colleagues to help those students interested in gaining insights into linguistic systems, including that of their mother tongue. (This situation may of course gradually change, with more $L_1$ teachers studying linguistics and with the introduction of linguistics at school). On the other hand, it may be that English teachers could do better than foreign-language teachers to excite interest in foreign literatures and to help develop a critical framework for reading them. Again, the activities of the foreign-language classroom might branch out towards the examination of political and social institutions, starting from the discovery that different countries organise their corporate and private lives in different ways, and it might at some point be appropriate for the language teacher to call in the sociology teacher. Or again, a discussion on the processes of language learning begun in the foreign-language classroom might end up in the biology laboratory.

All of this would of course be hopelessly idealistic, to say the least, to those who believe in neat administration or who harbour some concept of things which 'must' be taught. And again, it might be said that the sort of system or anti-system hinted at here would not only allow, but actually encourage, the rot to set in again in the foreign-language classroom, the rot being the speaking of English, talk about the language rather than in it, and so forth. The reply, in the light of revolutionary epistemics is that the edifice in danger of going rotten - if not in any case on the point of collapse - is one which was not built to accommodate learners in the first place. Therefore, let it rot. The chances are that if we can help learners to find a real interest in languages and in language generally, they will have the best possible basis for further learning when the time comes. This is much more important than teaching them to parrot twenty sentences they hardly understand, killing their interest in the process and putting them off language learning for the rest of their lives. In any case, we might be agreeably surprised at the results in terms of speaking foreign languages if students were helped to find and put to purposeful effect the sort of enjoyment or challenge which

most present-day language-teachers, as 'survivors of the system', probably had to find entirely by themselves when they were at school. But whatever the outcomes for practical mastery of foreign languages, it seems to me that foreign language learning must be understood as a much broader and more liberating experience than it is at present if it is to be directly relevant in a system which values the learner and the task of learning how to learn; and if it can be so understood, its potential as an area of educational enrichment is extremely high.

The Student - Teacher Relationship

Turning now to the question of the student - teacher relationship, this is the aspect of the teaching - learning process for which revolutionary epistemics may imply one of the greatest challenges to teachers, but an aspect lying at the epicentre of the revolution.

That revolutionary epistemics demands a much greater spirit of 'democracy' or 'non-authoritarianism' in the classroom is self-evident, and a move in this direction would necessarily be entailed in inviting students to share in the formulation of aims and the selection of learning strategies. To what extent the manipulation of learners by teachers will or should diminish, however, is another question. Jakobovits and Gordon (1974) believe that

> "Given the inequality in knowledge between the participants of an instructional dyad, the teaching process is inherently manipulative".

Consequently, they see the issue not so much in terms of an opposition between manipulation and non-manipulation as in terms of manipulation which is in the best interests of the learner rather than in the interests of the school or society, or the teacher. This type of manipulation lies in the adoption of a transactional mode designed to encourage the student and thereby foster learning, and in their book, Jakobovits and Gordon set out in detail the transactional strategies they think should be employed to these ends. They also argue that there is no way of escaping the fact that in any formal system of education the teacher will remain a teacher, and that the consistent adoption of 'supportive' transactional strategies in a way emphasizes this.

Outside the classroom, people do not consistently adopt such strategies, but behave with what we might consider to be greater 'naturalness', so that in this light even the good teacher's behaviour in the classroom could be viewed as non-authentic, and the question arises as to whether the use of consistently 'supportive' strategies, by virtue of being non-authentic, vitiates learning, and language learning in particular. Jakobovits and Gordon themselves believe that no harm ensues either for experiential or instructional learning.

I would contend that the authentic / non-authentic dichotomy is false in the first place, if we accept that the classroom situation is a natural situation of life, that it is or could be natural for the teacher to adopt in the classroom consistently supportive strategies, and that it is natural for students and teachers in this situation to play the transactional game demanded by it, as we play all sorts of transactional games demanded by different circumstances. While one must accept that a teacher might sometimes like to throw a brick at a student he finds particularly offensive, the fact that he does not do so, even verbally, is no less natural or authentic than his refraining from kicking his bank manager in the teeth. If genuine peers occasionally 'communicate' via physical assault, they probably do so more as a function of 'peerness' than of 'naturalness'. It does not seem to me, therefore, that revolutionary epistemics implies that teacher and student must regard each other as peers in any true sense, but if they could regard each other as whole personalities, that would be a sufficient step forward. However, I am more concerned with the question as to whether foreign language-learning experience should be confined to or thought principally to arise from teacher - student interaction, not so much because I do not believe that student - teacher interaction cannot entail any transfer of training to situations outside the classroom, or serve as a foundation onto which other modes or registers can be built in other situations, but rather because thinking in terms only or mainly of student - teacher interaction would be to miss opportunities to make language-learning more enriching. Assistants, who are more likely to behave as genuine peers towards students and, for example, trips abroad, are of course already well-established means of widening and enriching experience, where they are available. It

seems, however, that education authorities are beginning to wonder if they can afford the former, and we know that students often cannot afford the latter. But just to give an example of other possibilities, as far as I know, few people have so far tried systematically to tap the resources of our own immigrant community to see what help lies there. It seems that Colchester for instance has a German community numbering at least 1,000. Of these people, one might assume that some have forgotten most of their German, that others have full-time jobs, that a further proportion might not be helpful people anyway, but that out of the 1,000 there are perhaps at least 20 who would welcome the opportunity to talk about their native-country and to help others master their own language. I realise the dangers in what I am hinting at - opportunist education authorities taking advantage of the situation to abolish assistants, the teacher's unions objecting to unqualified helpers, etc. - but I still suspect that one of the reasons why this sort of help is not commonly envisaged is the feeling harboured by teachers that only they know the right way to teach people, that they must safeguard their pupils from 'outlandish' accents and dialects, that bringing in outsiders would somehow constitute a threat to the whole system. Nevertheless, I would propose that one crucial implication of revolutionary epistemics is a far greater humility on the part of teachers, a realisation that they are only one of many potential animating forces, and a readiness to exploit any situation which could benefit their learners and enrich the learning experience. The sort of thing I am hinting at by way of example should at least be thoroughly investigated. Even speakers of 'outlandish' accents might well be asked in a tactful way to take these 'outlandish' accents as a starting-point for discussion with students, and be offered a map of their native-country to aid them.

There is another implication of revolutionary epistemics for the student - teacher relationship which some might find the most unpalatable of all. This is that whereas in the teacher-directed classroom, the teacher can prepare the input in advance, and even work out strategies for ensuring control of the output, any idea of so doing in a consistent manner would have to be abandoned in the learner-centred classroom. This does not matter if the student - teacher relationship is such that the teacher can say he does not know the answer to everything, and if, when problems occur, they can be turned into a joint search for a solution. The consequence of this, however, is that while the teacher, for reasons already explained, must remain a teacher, he must also present himself to the learners as a learner. If there is to be any sort of peer-relationship, this is its proper modality.

The Teaching - Learning Environment

Writers on the subject of foreign language teaching have often commented that the classroom is an 'unnatural' situation for language learning. Gatenby, for example, (1948) appears to see the classroom-situation as one of the factors loading the dice against effective language learning from the start, given that there is only one teacher to thirty pupils or so, that discourse is limited to a narrow range of registers, that ostensive learning is extremely restricted etc. He is of course right, as anyone must be right on the basis of a comparison which takes the first-language learning situation as the natural one and assumes that the dominant objective is to gain at school the same speaking facility in foreign languages as one has in one's own. It is open to question, however, whether such a comparison is useful, given that the classroom is in fact the only situation in which many learners ever receive the opportunity to begin learning a foreign language. In this light, the classroom could even be said to be the natural setting for foreign language learning in many countries. But under the revolutionary paradigm, which both recognises different learning objectives and puts the stress on learning how to learn, the situation need not in any case be seen as disastrous. If one only wants to learn to read a foreign language, the classroom seems almost as good a place as any to do so. If one wants to learn to speak a foreign language, the classroom could be a suitable place to begin to learn to do so, and to learn how to continue to do so outside it. The main implication for the classroom is not that it should cease to exist, because we know it cannot, but rather that, taking it to include or be contiguous to other facilities, such as libraries, trips abroad, members of the local foreign community, cinemas, municipal Anglo-French societies, teachers of other subjects who have an interest in some aspect of a foreign culture or literature, etc., it should become the centre of a system of what Illich (1971) calls 'learning webs'. In other words, the classroom should be transcended in the classroom, and be regarded as a microcosm of the life about it, from which it is not separated by a yawning gulf, but with which it has palpable links. I am not yet sure in any detail how the appropriate 'learning webs' are to be spun, but I suggest that it is the legitimate task of the applied linguist to turn his mind to the problem of creating them, and establishing the right environment from both a physical and a psychological point of view. But probably more vital than the amassing of expensive equipment and resources

is a simple paradigm-change. If the classroom is seen to have walls, it will have them. If it is seen as being open to the life around it, the chances are that it will be. Knocking down walls, but especially those carefully built up in the mind under the present system of education, is what revolutionary epistemics is all about.

Conclusions

I have obviously not discussed exhaustively the implications of the educational technology revolution for language teaching and learning, but have tried to sketch out the likely nature of some of the broader implications in certain important areas. To summarise these broader implications:

1. Aims and motivation will need to be considered as an inseparable entity, the former being arrived at in the light of the latter.

2. Teaching strategies will have to become far more flexible than they tend to be today, and will have to integrate with learning strategies. Much greater individualisation will ensue both as a result of this type of flexibility and as a result of the respecting of the learner's right to contribute to the formulation of aims. Taking the motivational state of learners into consideration, and allowing for it to fluctuate and develop in different directions, perhaps several times during a learner's educational career, will also mean demoting global methods and promoting a range of more modestly conceived techniques. The general approach to teaching and learning will be highly eclectic but the new eclecticism will be principled insofar as it is based on finding techniques which suit the learner psychologically as well as in terms of efficiency, rather than being based on the haphazard application of all sorts of techniques by the teacher who cannot decide which approach works best.

3. Since learning how to learn will be considered more valuable than acquiring taxonomies of facts or even perfecting, while at school, certain types of skill-facility, an essentially humanistic conception of foreign language teaching and learning will - again? - be necessary if this field of activity is to have anything of value to contribute directly to the educational process. Another way of saying this is that the practical language mastery element will need to be seen as one sub-part of a much more embracing discipline, purged however of the sort of elitism

traditionally characteristic of say, literature-based studies.

4. The teacher - student relationship will need to be based firmly on a supportive transactional mode, which in itself implies that the teacher will remain a teacher and be seen to be a teacher. At the same time, however, the teacher will need to present himself as a peer in relation to the task of learning. He will also need to eclipse himself as a source of knowledge, and rather adopt the role of only one of many animating agencies, of which, however, he will remain the chief administrator.

5. The teaching - learning environment will need to become a system of 'learning webs', and if it does, the classroom need not be thought of as a disastrously inappropriate place for the conduct of language learning.

All these implications, if correctly deduced, will mean much work for the educational technologist and applied linguist alike. If I have ignored questions such as examinations, this is not because I necessarily forsee their abolition. Administered at the right times, in the right places and in the right form, as a means of establishing the legitimacy of claims made by learners, rather than teachers on their behalf, to licence to practise in fields of professional activity for example, I see them as fully justified. But the shape of teaching and learning must be determined by the way in which educators conceive those tasks and not by the whims of self-important administrations. Revolutionary epistemics and its furtherance would seem to demand of the applied linguist concerned with building systems and environments for teaching and learning that he should carefully consider the nature of the wider educational process to which he is contributing and what its underlying assumptions are. To do otherwise is to pass the buck to administrations, and to give up any claim to being an educator in a meaningful sense.

NOTES

1. I use this term liberally to include those who might not designate themselves 'educational technologists' but who, like Postman and Weingartner, are concerned with education as a controllable and adjustable system for bringing about attitudinal, behavioural and cognitive changes in the learner.

2. A plausible alternative analysis might be that 'educational technology' is really a misnomer, not only crediting this particular branch of knowledge and activity with an unattainable 'hardness' and 'objectivity' but also arousing false expectations as to its 'behaviour'. In this light and bearing in mind that the raw materials 'processed' by the 'technology' are the most explosive of all, namely, ideas, it may not be so strange after all that there is an occasional eruption.

3. c.f. Bung's definition of educational technology as:
   "the systematic use of scientific knowledge to plan and realise teaching processes which change the world in a desired way". (Bung 1974)

   This might be said to represent a good definition of 'traditional' educational technology, or a good 'traditional' definition of educational technology. Nothing is said of learning processes; and "in a desired way" leaves unanswered the question as to who it is who does the desiring: is it assumed that it must be those who plan and realise the teaching processes?

4. Neither this motto nor the motto of 'traditional epistemics' appears in Meredith 1975; he wrote them on the blackboard while speaking to his paper.

5. On 1st March 1976 on the theme of preparation for language courses.

6. The search for the 'perfect' method has in fact already been virtually abandoned for technical reasons - the apparent impossibility of controlling the variables involved. My suggestion is that it should be abandoned on principle. This does not, however, preclude the search for effective techniques.

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Rebuilding a Pedagogy of Language

Michael Taylor

This paper is offered as a contribution to the discussion which John Roberts proposes to initiate ("Revolutionary Epistemics and Language Learning"). The contact which I shall make with Roberts' paper is principally at the level of its "epistemic" commitment. My sketch of a pedagogy that flows from this source, and which in its turn supports a coherent approach to the teaching and learning of language, will lead me to adopt positions that differ more or less significantly from his.

In most times and places, the art or science of pedagogy has been taken to be a normative discipline in which a "teacher" is involved in a value-grounded manipulative process called "education". Seen in this light, the pedagogue is an applied philosopher.

> "The educator, by contrast with the philosopher, is concerned with the deliberate processes through which forms of thought may be handed on; he strives not only to understand these processes but also to institute or facilitate them, so that the mental habits in question may be properly acquired." (1)

For a few moments, however, in very recent time, we have witnessed the dismemberment of pedagogy into an array of teaching techniques and theories of learning, while "education" became little more than an ornament relegated to headlines and speechdays. Over this process presided a crude neo-positivism which denied ontological status to value and mind, and which found its clearest expression in a freewheeling "science" exempt from philosophical and ethical scrutiny.

This aberrant moment belongs I think, to the past; with the increasing recognition, among philosophers of science, that such things as theory, fact and knowledge are embedded in value, few would claim autonomy for "science" today. In an intellectual climate which is growing more philosophically-centred and therefore more impatient of imperialisms, there is a good prospect that the ailing ideals of "pedagogy" and "education" may regain their former power.

In what follows, I shall argue that the teaching and learning of language must be evaluated as an educational enterprise, and must be felt to be so by its participants. I shall begin by explaining what I consider to be the point of the term "pedagogy"; I shall then

examine the failure of language teaching in terms of the anti-educational orthodoxy under which it has been conducted. This will lead me to attempt to set language teaching upon a firmer foundation: this will entail, among other things, an unconventional view of the goals of linguistic description, a principled delimitation of the scope of "applied linguistics" and a plea for the overthrow of methodocracy. Central to a pedagogy of language is the notion of a pedagogically available description of language L - a notion which, however, cannot be developed within the confines of this paper. All I can do, towards the end, is to suggest a way in which the learner of a language can be sensitized to the nature of language itself.

* * *

Science appears to be losing confidence in its power to characterise the educational act and process. Its attempt is perhaps best epitomised by the short-lived attempt by psychology to amputate this act and process in the creation of a value-free "psychology of learning". Behaviourism was the quintessentially scientific view of human behaviour: scorning philosophical legitimacy in general and educational legitimacy in particular, it saw the learner as a reagent organism in conditions of control, of which the laboratory was the prototype, in an ethical and ideological vacuum. The demise of behaviourism has forced psychologists into a number of positions from which the philosophical spider can easily absorb them. One such position is represented by the expensive but futile efforts to compare teaching methods; another, by the botanical banalities of pure descriptivism accomplished by the seekers after "what happens in the classroom" (2). A third position is the well-known "cognitive" view, which recognises that learning (whether learning that X or learning to X) consists of the acquisition of knowledge following the understanding (and, sometimes, application) of rules. It looks as if psychologists are returning to the study of psyche and thereby asking useful questions once more. The present climate certainly seems to be a favourable one in which to reassert the need for a pedagogical theory (and with it, the primacy of the teacher) in any enterprise dedicated to restoring health to the careworn protagonists of language learning.

Let us start with a little conceptual analysis. The relation between "teach" and "learn" is - unlike that between the analogous "sell" and "buy" - a philosophically interesting one because the concepts are theoretically charged. Moreover, there is no simple complementarity between teaching and learning; an imbalance that derives, I think, from the rich ambiguity of "learn". Teaching - one might provisionally assert - presupposes human agency and intentionality, while learning presupposes neither. You can learn from machines, from experience, from observation, from "taking thought"; you can learn without intending to. Hence the impressive arguments for seeing learning in terms such as "change of behaviour".

But the learning that comes from compliance is very different from the learning that comes from consent; compliance is nothing if not manifested, while consent is unobservable. Where the trainer may exact compliance, it is the teacher who seeks consent. It would be better, then, to distinguish two senses of the term "learn", which are complementary to the terms "teach" and "train".

Not surprisingly, it has been common in a philosophically innocent age to stress the centrality of learning. This reflects the psychologist's scale of priorities, in which learning is a process happening in us, while teaching is merely a series of enabling impacts upon us. But if we disambiguate "learning" on the lines suggested above, and limit our attention to consent-learning (where humans seem to differ interestingly from rats and pigeons), we will recognise the logical primacy of teaching: teaching becomes the necessary (though not the sufficient) condition of learning. This recognition puts us firmly back in pedagogy, in the philosophy of teaching and of education; we see before us a conceptual spectrum - represented by such English words as "teach", "train", "condition", "indoctrinate", "instruct", "tell" - long familiar to the philosopher but clouded over by the psychologists' simplistic obsession with learning.

There is an important connotation of "teacher" in which it is asymmetrical with "learner". The good learner learns well; but in the phrase "good teacher", the adjective "good" refers both the expertness with which acts are performed and to the worthiness of the goals to which the performances are directed. The good teacher is necessarily well-informed,

well-trained, well-prepared; but this is not sufficient. He must also say something ("say" can be roughly paraphrased as "assert sincerely"). The teacher can be no more "objective" than the performer of a work of music; he creates a relationship by an activity of interpretation. All over the mechanised world, learners are "switching off" because their antennae pick up no engagement in their teachers, no authenticity in their teaching materials, no "pedagogical adequacy" in their physical environment. As the essential inauthenticity of tape and TV screen is recognised, more and more inert metal expensively litters our "educational" institutions.

> "When teachers have explained by means of words all those subjects which they profess to teach, then those who are called pupils consider within themselves whether what has been said is true. (3)

The learner may well repose belief in what he is authoritatively told; but his knowledge comes, if at all, from his evaluation of the truth of what is said to him. This evaluation emerges from a process of inward consideration. Moreover, he wants to talk back; he thrives, like Popper, (4) on provisional, assailable truths.

With the admission of concepts like engagement, authenticity and sincerity, we situate the teacher in a world very different from the positivistic domain in which he has been straitjacketed for a generation. We recognise that the teacher necessarily operates within a framework of values and therefore assumes a responsibility which is poles apart from the capacity to provoke responses. Thus, far from being a master of ceremonies, a primus inter pares of a pupil-centred group, the teacher re-emerges in pedagogical theory in the sign-bearing guise in which etymology unmistakably places him: as the strategist rather than the catalyst of learning.

* * * *

Just as pedagogy restores identity to the teacher by once more enquiring about his educational function, so it also restores actuality and urgency to such questions as what a school is, what a good school is, what is the status of a "subject", what is the lowest common denominator of "educated people", and so on. (The current popular debate

on such matters can be seen as clear evidence of the sterility of the psychology of learning.) In particular the pedagogical view of the educational process (how regrettable that such a cumbersome phrase should be necessary!) enables us to dissolve an important current perplexity which rears its head in several places in Roberts' paper. It is a perplexity that arises from secularism in its educational aspect, forcing us up against the eternal question: "what is the relation between X and the 'world'?", where X in this case stands for "the school" or "the lesson" or "the teacher".

The task of the teacher - unlike, say, that of the indoctrinator - is explanatory: by interpreting the particular in terms of the general, he conveys to the learner's mind a sense of the lawfulness of his subject-matter and indirectly helps him to develop a sense of the lawfulness of the world. The teacher's task cannot be that of transmitting such commodities as "facts", "truths" or "knowledge" in an ideological vacuum. Scheffler has well described the "transmission model" of the teacher:

> "Consider the impact of a runaway formalism on the role of the teacher. The transmission model of education, coupled with the drive towards increased efficiency, tends to foster the view of the teacher as a minor technician within an industrial process. The overall goals are set in advance in terms of national needs, the curricular materials prepackaged by disciplinary experts, the methods developed by educational engineers - and the teacher's job is just to supervise the last operational stage: the methodical insertion of ordered facts into the student's mind... Teacher education becomes identified with training in a subject, coupled with training in approved methods of teaching. In my view, this picture is radically wrong. The teacher in a free society is not just a technician. He influences students not just by what he does but by what he is, not just by the facts that he provides but by the questions that he provokes...."
>
> [5]

Education equips us to evaluate the world. In times of intellectual and social flux, a good education is one

which well equips the learner intellectually and morally to come to terms with a shifting world. Such equipment is gained not by immersion in the world but rather by the internalisation of rules and standards which have their being in a setting abstracted from the world. The primary task of the teacher is to effect this internalisation; only secondarily does he impart to his pupil particularities - experiences/experiments, "facts", words, tool-kits - insofar as they are vehicles for the readier apprehension of rules and standards. The school is in the world but not of it; for the pedagogue as for the poet, "the world is too much with us". The teacher who tries to make the classroom into a simulacrum of the world may sincerely believe, or else be powerfully persuaded, that he is doing his learners a service. Notions of "pupils' needs", "instructional objectives", "motivation", "usefulness" and "relevance" are invoked to support such a belief. But these and cognate notions are the weft of a sterile functionalism; however appealing they may seem to a psychologist of learning, they turn out on philosophical scrutiny to be either vacuous or else urgently in need of analysis. The teacher who rubs his learners' noses in the relevance of raw reality is guilty of simple dereliction of duty: guided rather than guiding. He is like the scientist who is content to list his observations: lacking abstraction, lacking principles of discrimination, he never gets anything said.

Thus the teacher whose stance is secular - who sees his task as that of preparing learners for such and such a contingent subworld - is bound to be perplexed, if not indeed paralysed, by the prospect of change. Synchronicism has left the modern language teacher with this perplexity in a particularly acute form. It has applied its notorious "eclipsing stance" to sanction a whole series of expedients, from stillborn machines to the massive nonentity of descriptivism, which are utterly devoid of educational resonance. Not surprisingly, those writers who are caught within it often display a peculiar indifference to style. Such statements as

> "Given the inequality of knowledge between participants of an instructional dyad, the teaching process is inherently manipulative" (6)

can be explained only on the assumption that the writers genuinely imagine that they are saying something for the first time. Cursory acquaintance with the literature of pedagogy would save us from such naive verbiage. One is

tempted to agree with AJP Taylor that

> "what is true is not new, and what is new is either untrue or unimportant." (7)

It is worth enquiring briefly whether technology has any place in the pedagogical process as I have so far outlined it. I think that the answer to this question may lie in the notion of an ecological rather than a predatory technology, of a technology of containers rather than of machines (8), a "feminine" technology for minds rather than a "masculine" technology for responses. The ingenuity that has failed with teaching machines might profitably be devoted to putting carpets on classroom floors and curtains round the windows.

* * * *

It has been customary to derive the principles of language teaching and learning from the twin disciplines of modern linguistics and the psychology of learning. It is becoming clear, however, that applied linguistics and applied psychology are bound to drift, for the theoretical piles on which they are supported are shallow. Saussurean linguistics has become unsure of its authority to legislate for the study of language; its axioms are embedded in an imperialistic "science" which has had its day. Linguists seem more noticeably engaged in perimeter skirmishes than in consolidating the centre; the aggressive thrust has yielded to a conciliatory, not to say ecumenical, posture. As for the "science" of psychology: it was discredited, with the rout of behaviourism. Both linguistics and psychology are now seeking the hospitality of philosophy; especially the philosophies of knowledge and of mind. It is in this development that new hope for a pedagogy of language lies. One might even assert that Chomsky's essentially non-technical service to the teacher and learner was to free language from the bleak dominion of psychology, thus making a pedagogy of language once more conceivable.

This pedagogy must be mediated by an applied linguistics with a new pedigree. I believe that we can establish such a pedigree by placing linguistic description, pedagogical grammar, language teaching and language learning in close congruity, the whole being anchored by a theory of education.

Let us first stipulate the scope of the term "applied linguistics". There are two circumstances, I think, which

distinguish the application of linguistics from the application of other sciences. One is the relative smallness of the base upon which applications - if they are to be applications of linguistics - must stand. The other is the relative diffuseness of the objectives to which the task of application is directed. From these facts derives the uneasy relation between the linguist and the world, reflected in the ambiguity of the collocation "applied linguistics". There is a trivial sense in which the term covers any activity in which the fact of language is an ingredient. But if we respect the separateness of the two concepts, and interpret "applied linguistics" as "linguistics with something done to it", we shall have the worthwhile task of defining "application" in such a way that the linguistic base is not eroded - and may indeed be strengthened - by the mode of its application.

One condition of this must be intellectual parity between theory and application. Just as theory specifies the bounds of what count as "facts of language", so there must be a parallel specification of the bounds of appropriate application. There must be criteria by which appropriateness of application can be measured. And the discipline of applied linguistics must be supported by solid, well-articulated conceptual scaffolding.

This not the picture that meets the eye of the disinterested observer. He sees a variegated, eclectic enterprise in which it seems possible to thrive with only the most perfunctory allegiance to a linguistic base; an enterprise strangely deficient, both in criteria of its scope and effectiveness, and in the quality of its operative concepts; an enterprise lacking procedures of criticism and exegesis; in short, an enterprise pursued in a philosophical vacuum. We shall look in vain, in the literature of applied linguistics, for reference to work done in the philosophy of education, such prime terms as we find - "need", "situation", "function", "communication" - seem to be taken over uncritically from the largely bankrupt behavioural sciences.

I believe that the criterion of appropriate application of linguistic theory is furnished by the twin concepts of mind and knowledge. I believe, that is, that the essential and primary application of linguistics lies in the study

and enablement of mental interaction through language, and in the associated study of the meaning of "knowledge of language L". Somewhat parodying Chomsky, one might assert that the primary application of linguistics is precisely to the study of the human mind; and it is hard to think of an application that is more likely to fructify the parent theory. The data at the applied linguist's disposal derive from the experiences of learning and teaching language; of inquiring into how knowledge of a language is gained, retained and lost; of composing and interpreting language. Central to his task is the creation of a genuinely available pedagogical grammar.

I should like to suggest at this point that we might assign to linguistics the same teleological raison-d'etre as is customarily assigned to medicine. In other words, I suggest that the "pedagogical availability" of a theoretical description is not simply a (more or less desirable) feature of that description, but nothing less than a criterion of its explanatory adequacy. By "pedagogical availability", I am not referring to contingent virtues such as its sensitivity to the changing needs of the "consumer", or its property of being hypodermically conveyable by this or that piece of classroom machinery. Pedagogical availability consists not in serviceability but in power: the power to engage the teacher and the learner in the linguistic subset of that set of activities which they know from experience to be mind-nourishing, and which they classify as broadly "educational".

* * * *

What are the characteristics of a pedagogy of language? They will emerge most clearly, perhaps, from a delineation of the anti-educational orthodoxy in which most language-learning has been attempted in our part of the world over the last twenty years. It is an orthodoxy in which intelligence was outlawed, curiosity curbed, pedagogy proscribed: all in servitude to a set of "scientific" methodologies by which a generation of learners was trained to parrot useful phrases in a vacuum of brain and spirit.

The anti-educational orthodoxy enters the classroom as an impressive theory resting upon four assumptions of increasing generality. Firstly, there is the assumption

that language is behaviour; something done rather than something known, occurring rather than existing. To learn a language, then, is to acquire a repertoire of verbal gestures. Second, it is held that language is essentially instrumental rather than expressive. Appropriacy is all, adequacy is nothing (9); gestures, then, are "right" and "meaningful" insofar as they procure gratification to their user.

Third comes the obliteration of the distinction between teaching and training. Instead of fulfilling his strictly pedagogical function of keeping real life at bay, the teacher is supposed to rehearse his pupils in discrete episodes of "reality"; so "contexts of situation" must be devised, within which appropriate verbal gestures will have their place. Following the reduction of the task of the teacher comes, fourthly, the reduction of the whole scope of education itself. To educate, now, becomes to socialize: not to form, but only to mould.

This orthodoxy could prevail only at the cost of a drastically curtailed model of what a human being is, a model that could only have survived in a seriously impoverished philosophical climate. The model is that of an automaton conditioned to react verbally to procure satisfaction of discrete things called "needs". Behavioural psychology, Wittgensteinian semantics, British "situation-sensitive" linguistic theory and - one is tempted to speculate - political egalitarianism have conspired in this triumph of reductionism, by which human language-users appear as situation-sensitive parrots with well-stocked repertoires and nothing to say. It is hard to conceive of a more democratic way to "disenfranchise the masses".

Fortunately, you can fool some of the people some of the time.....; and one prominent feature of the seventies is the demand for real education - for education, rather than for all those other more businesslike-sounding articles with which education may so conveniently be confused. Pedagogy is concerned precisely with this demand, and offers to satisfy it by stressing that the conceptual distinctiveness of "education" lies in the specification of ends rather than of means. Education is for making well-formed persons. Persons are defined as knowing themselves, and as having some theory of an ordered world around them. They are defined, further, as capable of idealism, of the vision of great achievement. The educator cannot transmit greatness, but he must confront his pupils with examples of it, and

indicate in which direction it lies. In a word, he must guide their growth, as persons, by revealing to them order and by pointing the way to mastery.

What has been the language teacher's contribution to these central educational tasks? It has been very small indeed: the language teacher has been a victim of that sinister process whereby ends are swallowed up by means; he has been suborned by method. At the behest of methodocracy, he has connived in an activity that suspends the intellectual growth of his learners by denying them the opportunity of self-knowledge and the vision of a spirit-enriching end. One example of this is his devotion to the useful, his capitulation to demands for "relevance", his acquiescence in the "functional" doctrine that there is some sort of continuity between booking a hotel room and writing a poem. But he has had very little room to manoeuvre. Behind him, a mountain of material thrown up in a stupendously misconceived quest for scientific order, in front of him, thirty minds, each groping for that order which is rooted in understanding and which alone contains the seeds of growth. But these are incompatible orders, and the teacher stands impotent at the point of opposing forces.

> "An order of statements can be logical or illogical. A method of teaching may be psychological or unpsychological; the latter, presumably, if the order of experience produces mental confusion and intellectual distaste in the learner." (10)

Most of the thirty minds, if they belong to language learners, go away untaught, in confusion and distaste: they do not understand. Writing of mathematical understanding, Poincaré points out that for most people,

> "... it is important to know not only whether all the syllogisms of a demonstration are correct, but why they are linked together in one order rather than in another. As long as they appear to them to be engendered by caprice, and not by an intelligence constantly conscious of an end to be attained, such people do not consider that they have understood ... What happens? They are unable to grasp the tenuous threads linking one bit of evidence to another; sooner or later, they will abandon all hope of understanding mathematics, as each bit of evidence seems more and more

unmotivated and unilluminating." (11) (my underlining)

Only certain kinds of ordering induce understanding, and therefore learning; Poincaré's words constitute an acute comment on the plight of the language teacher.

It is not only the familiar transposition of ends and means for which the methodologists must stand arraigned in the court of education. They are responsible, more specifically, for isolating the modern languages teacher from the paideia of the school. Schoolteachers impart either "knowledge" or "skill", and all teachers know which side they are on. But the teacher of modern languages has been manoeuvred into limbo: estranged from his "academic" colleagues (who at least aspire to pass on high-level principles with the aid of which the real world can subsequently be handled), he cannot feel at home among the practical actualities of cookery and woodwork. He knows that there may well be recipes for sub-languages, but not for language itself. Of course, he may claim to be a teacher sui generis; but in the absence of counter-evidence, it is better to conclude that he is simply not teaching.

Hirst has deplored what he calls the anti-intellectualism of certain trends in contemporary education: the sad thing about the modern languages teacher's contribution to this trend is that it has been powerful but largely involuntary.

> "We must firmly reject the anti-intellectualism of certain contemporary movements in education. A curriculum which underplays cognitive objectives is limiting the pupils' development not only in these cognitive respects but in all the other ways that presuppose those cognitive achievements... This means that we must get away completely from the idea that linguistic and abstract forms of thought are 'not for some people'. The use of symbolism is basic to the development of mind... We must therefore get away from a retreat into the arts and practical activities, as being more suitable for the less intellectually able." (12)

The study of "linguistic and abstract forms of thought", then, is an essential part of education; language teachers have been manoeuvred into denying that this is so. It is also, as Hirst urges, an essential part of everyone's education, in fact, only a small minority of schoolchildren

have the opportunity to experience it. However, this raises questions about the criteria for curricular design, which would take us beyond the scope of this paper.

* * * *

How can pedagogy return to language teaching and language learning? The central substantive task remains the creation of a grammar that is genuinely available to the pedagogue and therefore to the learner, a grammar of a kind described by Pit Corder:

> (the term "pedagogic grammar") "refers to a "way of thinking" about, or "representing" those categories and relations of the target language grammar which have been validated by linguistic research so that they can become accessible to the learner." (13)

This is not the place to consider such a vast problem. I should like, however, to sketch briefly an educational process which, I think, is presupposed by a pedagogical grammar of language L. I refer to a language-sensitisation curriculum.

In an age in which the scientific world-picture is in the ascendant, it is assumed that every child should be made familiar - by a mixture of experience and introspection - with mathematical processes. Such awareness is quite rightly regarded as the indispensable foundation upon which subsequent mathematical specialisms can be raised. There would seem to be no good reason why a restored pedagogy should not develop an analogous approach to language. It seems reasonable to imagine that, just as "mathematics" is both a cover-term for such disciplines as number theory, algebra and geometry and an abstraction from these, so also the study of languages in particular might presuppose the study of language in general. This idea has, of course, been put forward from time to time. It appears, however, to have attracted little interest, at least in the U.K., whether because such "linguistic" curricula as exist (14) are felt to be purely auxiliary or impracticable, or else because it is generally taken for granted that language sensitisation is a by-product of mother-tongue teaching.

Unfortunately, the grounds for this latter assumption appear to be weakening. The fact that contemporary mother-tongue teaching stresses a functional rather than a grammatical approach to language study; the fact that the study of

Classical languages (which can hardly be undertaken otherwise than grammatically) is decaying in our secondary schools, the fact, above all, that learners of modern foreign languages have been the victims of the betrayal which I have described in this paper - these facts, taken in conjunction, point to a curricular vacuum which may have its most dramatic expression in many English native speakers' notorious underachievement in modern language learning, but which is adequately identified only at a deeper level. I believe that a "language sensitisation curriculum" must be designed not as just another recipe for language learning, nor even as an innovatory mother-tongue programme. It must go deeper, if it is to yield interesting results at the level of classroom performance. Thus I envisage a three-tier, "Chinese-box", curriculum: the deep language-sensitisation component would be (logically) primary; from it would flow a mother-tongue curriculum; both would be input to a pedagogical grammar of a given non-native language.

* * * *

I should like to end with some words written by John Stuart Mill about a hundred and forty years ago.

> "In ancient times, education consisted not in giving what is called knowledge - that is, grinding other men's ideas down to a convenient size, and administering them in the form of "cram" - it was a series of exercises in the thinking faculty itself, that the mind, being active and vigorous, might go forth and know.... Modern education is all cram. The world already knows everything and has only to tell it to its children, who for their part have only to hear and lay it to rote. Those studies which only train the faculties, and produce no fruits obvious to the sense, are fallen into neglect... Even the ancient languages, which, when rationally taught, are, from their regular and complicated structure to a certain extent a lesson in logical classification and analysis, are insensibly falling into disrepute. Instead of them, we are getting the ready current coin of modern languages, and physical science taught empirically, by committing to memory its results." [15]

That which Mill could safely assume, we have today to spell out again: the study of languages is inconceivable in an educational vacuum. Far too often, language is still presented as a thing to be crammed and administered: as ready current coin. Currently fashionable sociolinguistic approaches give theoretical sanction to this reductionist view. It is, however, a view that must be challenged if a pedagogy of language is to be rebuilt.

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9. This useful but neglected distinction is found in Angus McINTOSH. Appropriacy (a prime term in sociolinguistic approaches to language) is, roughly, conformity to demands placed on the individual from outside himself; adequacy refers to the match between the individual's linguistic performance and his inner (expressive, et.c) needs. Even an elementary analysis of this kind shows up the slipperiness of the concept of "need".

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Cognitive-experiential Second Language Learning

I.M. Roca

0. Presentation

What follows is a brief description of course LA 491 at the University of Essex, and of the philosophy which underlies it. Some basic assumptions are introduced first. A special section is then devoted to the experiential bias of the approach, probably the most crucial and original aspect of the method. Finally, a sketch of course LA 491 itself is given, and an attempt is made to relate the actual methodology to the principles which inspire it.

In the elaboration of this paper I have benefited from several discussions with my colleagues and with members of the M.A. in Applied Linguistics course, following papers delivered at the Thanted Language Teaching Symposium and as part of the Applied Linguistics seminar programme.[1] But the greatest debt of gratitude I owe to my own students who have taken LA 491 during the last eight sessions. Their difficulties, their errors, their questions, their criticisms, and, above all, their patience and enthusiasm, have made a decisive contribution to shaping the course into its present format. To them all my thanks.

1. Some basic assumptions.

1. Creativity. Language is creative, i.e. free from outside control (including both external stimuli and internal states), innovative (we constantly say or understand sentences that we never heard before), and appropriate to the situation (which excludes free innovative associations made in an entirely random way).[2] If language is creative, behaviourist approaches to language teaching, based on S-R learning theories, are doomed to failure. It must not be forgotten that, as Chomsky has repeatedly pointed out, Skinner's theory of verbal behaviour hinges on an illegitimate terminological shift from the animal behaviour laboratory to real human life.[3] Also, ethologists have shown that animal behaviour itself is far more complex than has been generally assumed. Human creativity must be seen within the general context of human nature. The most basic drive in man is self-realisation, be it in a socio-political context or with regard to language. For Humboldt, only what is done freely is human. For the same author, language is energeia rather than ergon, i.e. form rather than substance. Both strands are explicitly put together by Chomsky: "The fundamental human capacity is the capacity and the need for creative self-expression, for free control of all aspects

of one's own life and thought. One particularly crucial realisation of this capacity is the creative use of language as a free instrument of thought and expression' (Chomsky 1969: 31)

ii. Competence is distinct from performance. Competence refers to the abstract knowledge which enables the ideal speaker-hearer of a homogeneous language community to generate an unbound number of grammatical sentences of that language. Performance, on the other hand, is the actualisation of the competence in a given context or environment. Thus performance is what actually happens in a certain speech act, whilst competence is the underlying knowledge of the language (i.e. of the grammar, since the language is made up of the sentences generated by the set of rules which constitute the grammar) which makes possible the actual occurrence of such a speech act. The idea here is that the manifestation reveals an underlying predisposition. Performance contains a number of constraints (e.g., the finiteness of memory, the limitations introduced by physical and emotional fatigue, etc.) which, while trivial to the constitution of competence, can (and often do) prevent the full actualisation of the system of knowledge. Abstract as the construct might be, the distinctions introduced by the competence/performance dichotomy are nonetheless perfectly useful, as well as being a totally legitimate scientific tool. The concept is, moreover, entirely intelligible, and it possesses a very respectable philosophical tradition behind it.[4]

iii. Adult language acquisition is basically identical with child language acquisition. There is no clear cut-off point in the operation of the language acquisition device. Lenneberg[5] claimed the existence of a critical period for language learning, which would last from the age of two to puberty. At this time, the lateralisation of the language function would be completed, bringing about the loss of cerebral plasticity and the ending of acquisition by mere exposure. There is now some evidence, however, that things are not so clear-cut as Lenneberg suggested. Krashen has shown that all of Lenneberg's data are consistent with the hypothesis that lateralisation is completed by five: 'in all cases of injury to the right hemisphere resulting in speech disturbance, the lesion was incurred before five' (Krashen 1973: 65). Also, with the aid of experiments using diachotic listening, 'no significant change in degree of lateralization or right ear

advantage was found for the age range tested, from four to nine. In addition, the degree of lateralization exhibited by the children is the same as that shown by adults tested under similar conditions' (Krashen 1973: 66). If it is the case that the completion of lateralisation occurs before five, and that acquisition by exposure can happen any time before puberty, it follows that the ceasing of the latter cannot be ascribed to the occurrence of the former. A case in point here is that of the adolescent girl Genie, whose language acquisition is taking place in a 'natural' way, despite the fact that lateralisation is undoubtedly completed. Krashen reports that 'for Genie both linguistic and non-linguistic processing is taking place in the right hemisphere' (Krashen 1973: 71), and he suggests that 'the development of lateralisation may represent the acquisition of an ability rather than the loss of an ability' (Krashen 1973: 69). Also Taylor (1974: 25 ff.) has noted that the basic learning strategies are the same for child first language, for child second language, and for adult language, viz. the simplification and regularisation of the structure of the target language. In view of all this, there seems to be no compelling reason for supposing the existence of different biological structures for child and adult language learning. The weaker hypothesis of identity of structures is thus to be preferred.

iv. There are innate structures which account for language learning, and they operate in the form of a hypothesis-making device. Chomsky[6] has pointed out the serious difficulty of explaining language acquisition otherwise, taking account of the degenerate nature of the input (accompanied by the normally passive attitude of the environment), the rapidity of the process (usually two years), the complexity of the system acquired, and the remarkable degree of perfection attained by any normal subject, with complete independence of intelligence or environmental interference (given, of course, a minimum of language exposure). Of course, the assignment of a definite concrete structure to the postulated innate device is not a feasible task as yet. Indeed, the whole of transformational generative grammar can be viewed as an attempt to give actual substance to the claim, at least with regard to an abstract formalisation of the

innate structures. The second part of the task falls outside the domain of linguistics proper: 'the neurologist faces the problem of discovering the mechanisms that determine this schematism and the biologist the problem of explaining how these developed in the course of human evolution' (Chomsky 1971: 44). Besides this, the activities of the language learning device can be pictured as being parallel to those of the scientist engaged in the construction of hypothetico-deductive models, i.e. as consisting essentially in the setting up of hypotheses which would account for a given corpus, then testing them with new data, which will confirm or (eventually, maybe) falsify them, thus leading to the construction of new hypotheses. This is essentially what Chomsky means when he says that 'a child who is capable of language learning must have: (12) (i) a technique for representing input signals, (ii) a way of representing structural information about these signals, (iii) some initial delimitation of a class of possible hypotheses about language structure, (iv) a method for determining what each such hypothesis implies with respect to each sentence, (v) a method for selecting one of the (presumably, infinitely many) hypotheses that are allowed by (iii) and are compatible with the given primary linguistic data' (Chomsky 1965: 30). Note that (v) in the list above refers to an evaluation measure, of the kind that is also used in theoretical science.

v. There are important contextual differences between child and adult language learning. These differences can be grouped under two headings: a. cognitive differences, b. socio-psychological differences.

a. Cognitive differences. These stem from the fact that the adult, unlike the child, is in possession of his full cognitive capacity.[7] The present approach to language teaching capitalises on this fact, incorporating explanation as an integral part of the process, thus preferring analysis to analogy, in contrast to basic behaviouristic tenets. Also, the different language skills are viewed as different channels which lead to the same cognitive process. Hence, no rigid separation of skills is introduced, here again in direct opposition to what is propounded by the audio-lingual approach.[8] All this does not preclude the possibility of structuring, which is indeed one of the basic principles of the cognitive-experiential model which is being expounded here. Grading takes account of the limitations of memory and the learning device. As Wilga Rivers et al. warn us, 'an impossible task, which bewilders and discourages the student too early

in his language learning, is just as inhibiting of ultimate fluency as lack of opportunity to try what he can do about what he knows' (Rivers et al. 1976: 46).

b. Socio-psychological differences. These play a crucial role in adult language learning, to the extent that it would not be too risky to ascribe its main differences with child language learning to their operation. Guiora has set up the concept of language ego in a parallel fashion to the Freudian body ego: 'language, too, will have, similar to the body ego, its physical outlines and firm boundaries' (Guiora 1972: 144). The language ego thus relates to matters of self-representation, boundaries and integration, and it is not surprising that the acquisition of a new language may result in psychological threat. This, of course, would be an important barrier to overcome by the adult, but not by the child language learner. Another of Guiora's constructs, empathy, relates to the actual learning process: 'empathy is the process of comprehending in which a temporary fusion of self-object boundaries, as in the earliest pattern of object relation, permits an immediate emotional apprehension of the affective experience of another, this sensing being used by the cognitive function to gain understanding of the other' (Guiora 1972: 142). It is in early childhood that the empathic capacity functions at its best. Very interestingly, authenticity of foreign language pronunciation (the one component most closely related to ego identity for Guiora) correlates positively with higher degree of empathy, as measured by the Micro-Momentary Expression Test, and is considerably improved by alcohol intake, which, at the same time, impairs overall mental functioning. Schumann (1975) lists some of the social barriers which might have an adverse effect on adult language learning: cultural alienation, brought about by the hostility of the host society or by the efforts of the expatriate community to keep hold of the learner; language shock, that refers to the frustration of the learner when he realizes that he cannot give free and accurate expression to his thoughts and feelings in the new language, which engenders fear of ridicule and a sense of shame and insufficiency; culture shock, stemming from the many everyday life events which are very easily soluble in the native country, but which become problematic in the new one, thus adding to the difficulty of having to cope with the language; culture stress, which relates to problems of identity and role in the new society. Finally, Spolsky has called our attention

to the fact that, because 'learning a second language is a key to possible membership of a secondary society', 'the desire to join that group is a major factor in language learning' (Spolsky 1969: 282). With this in mind, he carried out an experiment to establish a correlation between achievement in foreign language learning and the choice of the speakers of that language as a reference group by the learner. The original hypothesis was confirmed: that there is a negative correlation between achieving proficiency in the foreign language and maintaining full membership of the original society.

2. Language as an experience.

We have seen above that language and ego are inextricably bound together. Language is not a commodity which can be bought, but an experience to be gone through. This experience can be painful for an adult, due to the various socio-psychological constraints which are in operation. The role of the teacher and of the teaching situation consists in minimising this pain.

In the present model the relationship between the participants in the teaching act is one of equality, each of them contributing to the common purpose from the particular position he happens to occupy. In language acquisition, talk of learning makes far more sense than talk of teaching. In this way, the protagonist role undergoes a radical shift, away from the teacher and onto the learner. The learner is elevated to the category of full active participant, on an equal footing with the teacher, who now becomes a facilitator. The teacher is the leader that takes the learner into the new territory, but it is the learner who explores and ultimately conquers it. The aim of the whole operation, of which the teacher is an integral part, is to provide a situation where the process of language acquisition can be optimised both spatially (ground covered) and temporally (speed). The teacher, as the rest of the environment, is there to help remove the natural obstacles which will emerge in the course of the enterprise. From the field of educational psychology, McLeish takes up a similar stand when he asserts that there is room for a Copernican revolution similar to that which has occurred in primary school education in the past half-century. Under the Ptolomeic regime, everything in the classroom revolves around the teacher who is the centre and

source of warmth and light. The Copernican revolution puts the student at the centre of the educational process' (McLeish et.al. 1973: 89). For the same author, this attitude fosters creativity, one of the essential features of human language, as has been seen above: 'the common element in teaching methods which preserve, or perhaps develop, creativity is a special kind of informality based on fellowship and the essential equality of teachers and learners, partners in a common pursuit. The informality of the method is shown by the fact that the teacher abandons the function of oracle, he relinquishes control of every detail of the didactic situation' (McLeish et.al. 1973: 90). All this goes in line with principles basic to the Chomskyan model of language. Chomsky himself suggests that 'a teaching programme [must] be designed in such a way as to give free play to those creative principles that humans bring to the process of language learning'. And he adds: 'I think we should probably try to create a rich linguistic environment for the intuitive heuristics that the normal human being automatically possesses' (Chomsky 1968b: 108). Thus, in McLeish's words, 'the teacher's role becomes that of an "eye-opener", possibly even "brain-opener". His task is to show connections between the problems and projects, and the organised body of knowledge' (McLeish et.al. 1973: 89-90).

The present model views language as the instrument through which the human being attempts to put himself over to another human being, i.e. as a verbal projection of his humanity, as well as a realisation of the self in his being-with-other. Though conceptually independent, language is existentially interdependent. We clothe our thoughts and feelings in language, and a very important part of our loyalties is determined by it. Any attempt to teach language as a system of symbols devoid of any existential value would result in complete failure. Fortunately for teachers and learners, this claim is incapable of empirical verification, since the annihilation of human factors in a human situation is, by definition, an impossible task. No wonder therefore that all language courses do attain a certain level of success, if often rather modest. To add to what has been said in section I about the pains and perils of adult language learning, we can now quote Christophersen, for whom the process of teaching foreign languages is essentially a process of creating bilinguals. When faced with the problems mentioned above, he comments that 'the bilingual's

difficulties are almost entirely extralinguistic', and that his 'emotional maladjustment is environmentally determined and is not the result of any strain caused by having to cope with two languages' (Christophersen 1973: 79). It is thus not too far-fetched to suppose that 'a person who appears hopeless at languages is not necessarily lacking in the appropriate intellectual ability, it may be a personality trait that inhibits him, he may be resisting what seems to him an encroachment on his personality' (Christophersen 1973: 22). The conflicts of group pertaining and group allegiance can become too difficult for the learner to cope with. This can trigger off a series of psychological processes of which the learner is quite unaware and over which he has little effective control. At a more conscious level, he will blame the grammar of the new language, or the teaching method, or his own lack of time and concentration, thus diverting the teacher's attention, as well as his own's, from what is the only real problem in the process.

Note that I am not subscribing to any kind of language determinism a la Whorf. Neither am I advocating the framing of the language into a general cultural or literary context while this can undoubtedly be useful as a means of introducing the learner into the foreign society and cushioning the initial collision, it can prove just as alienating as the abstract symbolic approach if done without proper consideration for the learner and for the learning process. The danger of elevating the foreign culture to a pedestal of myth and privilege, and the monopoly of such a culture by the teacher or the teaching community, who impose their own interpretation of it on the learner, can pose a further and very real threat to him. It is also very doubtful that the particular aspects of the culture which are often selected (folklore and national clichés) are of any relevance to the learner's real psychological needs. The introduction of culture can therefore be a distracting factor, and thus add to the difficulty of the foreign language learning process.

Ecologically, what is being advocated here is the reversal of the focus on the second language learner of the last twenty years, along similar lines to the position taken by the anti-psychiatry movement with regard to the treatment of schizophrenia, which supports the view that the schizophrenic condition is a manifestation of a conflict between the socialized patient and his environment. This conflict arises because of the irreconcilable demands of the environment, which usually take the form of paradoxical or double binds. Thus schizophrenia is not seen as an illness, in the sense that one talks about an illness which affects the physical body. Rather, in Cooper's words, 'schizophrenia is a total social crisis, a situation in which the acts and experience of a certain person

are invalidated by others for certain intelligible cultural and micro-cultural (usually familial) reasons, to the point where he is elected and identified as being 'mentally ill' in certain ways and is then confirmed by a specifiable but highly arbitrary labelling process in the identity 'schizophrenic patient' by sectors of quasi-medical agents' (Cooper 1967: 16). The only way that the 'patient' can get out of the conflict is by stopping his normal interaction with the environment and withdrawing into the condition. As Laing says, 'the experience and behaviour that gets labelled schizophrenic is a special strategy that a person invents in order to live in an unlivable situation. In his life situation, the person has come to feel he is in an untenable position. He cannot make a move, or make no move, without being beset by contradictory and paradoxical pressures and demands, pushes and pulls, both internally, from himself, and externally, from those around him. He is, as it were, in a position of "checkmate" (Laing 1967: 95). In the process of depersonalisation which goes along with this way of proceeding, the ultimate stage will be the reification of the 'patient' as an 'object of study'. For the anti-psychiatrists, however, 'the problem lies not in the so-called "ill person" but in the interacting network of persons, particularly his family, from which the labelled patient, by a piece of conceptual violence of hand, has already been abstracted' (Cooper 1967: 43). Putting back the sufferer in the real context of his behavioural universe is thus the first step towards understanding his illness, and a precondition to any kind of possible healing interaction. Next will come the strengthening of his own ego to enable it to break away from the double-bind and fend for himself in the world outside. The role of the psychiatrist thus undergoes a radical shift, away from being a 'verifier' into being a 'personaliser', from being a societal agent into being the natural ally of the sufferer.

Note that the parallelism between teaching and psychotherapy had been drawn before. The basis for this connection had been found in the fact that our perceptions are filled with all kinds of preconceptions and assumptions about both the outside reality as it enters our minds. The role of psychotherapy is to challenge these assumptions when they sustain negative states of mind, and the role of teaching would be a similar one of making explicit what the assumptions are. Thus Ehrenzweig suggests that 'if one could create

to a teaching situation something of the atmosphere... in [a] therapeutic group, new ways of seeing and thinking might be encouraged' (Abercrombie 1960: 17). A certain amount of discomfort is unavoidable: 'It is inevitable that some aspects of the course should be painful to some people, since it continually exposes the inadequacies of their customary approach to problems'. And she adds: 'I do not think it is possible to protect students entirely from the discomfort of finding that they make mistakes. What is important is that they should recognize....., however late, to what extent their emotional reactions block learning' (Abercrombie 1960: 88). All this can be taken over to foreign language learning almost verbatim. Note that, being the learner's equal, the teacher will receive his share of the burden, and might find some of his most precious beliefs challenged and eventually destroyed. This is not only unavoidable, but essential to a situation of real equality.

Equality here means that both the learner and the teacher are viewed as two fully-fledged human beings in a relation of full respect for each other. Respect, in this context, must not be interpreted as formality. Rather, it appeals to a full acceptance of the validity of each other's on-going experience, and of the right for each to make his own choices. In other words, it amounts to seeing each other as an autonomous human being. If the learner is given full control over himself, this naturally implies that he is entitled to exercise this choice, to make mistakes and to monitor himself, i.e. the human being is viewed as potentially self-directing.[9] In the area of language teaching this premise should not be of difficult acceptance to any experienced teacher. Not only is the student the one who will ultimately have the sole control of the language he learnt, but also it is only him who has de facto control during the learning process itself, regardless of the efforts of both teachers and machines.

There is another powerful reason for making the learner the centre of the process. The present model views language learning as a grasping or 'realisation' of the objects which constitute the language. These 'language objects' pertain to the level of competence, and their theoretical analysis is not easy in our present stage of knowledge in the areas of linguistics and psychology. In an intuitive way, however, they can be understood to make up the grammar of the language. In this grammar I virtute all the levels of Chomsky's

theoretical 'competence grammar', from phonetics to semantics, as well as other factors which are present in the actual speech act, e.g. communicative competence. Language acquisition can be seen as the acquisition of language objects, in the sense just defined. The grasping of the language takes place along the time axis, and can thus be viewed as an accumulation of language objects, in the understanding that this accumulation is a dynamic process through which the language objects themselves progressively take shape.

The only existence of language objects is in the mind. It could be said that language acquisition consists in the creation of language objects in the mind. This creation, however, does not happen in a void. On the contrary, it stems from the experience of the language as part of the world in which we live. Explanation, alongside genuine experience, can lead to the emergence of language objects in the mind. Two terms taken from phenomenology can be of use here: Besinnung and Erlebnis. Besinnung is equivalent to (cognitive) realisation or prise de conscience, i.e. language object formation in the mind of language learning. Erlebnis points at the way in which Besinnung is achieved, i.e. by experiencing acts of consciousness (see Bruzina 1970: 45). It is crucial to emphasise here that the apprehension of the language object does not take place through mere passive presence of the reality in question. This is indeed the reason why 'language practice' as such simply does not work. Language practice can very easily become the arena for behaviouristic conditioning, thus - following the view put forward here - hindering the learning process. The present model takes the emphasis away from the observable 'language practice' situation, with all its technological paraphernalia and puts it on the unobservable, viz. the workings of the mind. This is not to deny the existence of a strong connection between mind and situation. On the contrary, what is being sought is precisely this connection in order to allow the transfer of objects from the experiential context to the mind. Only in this way do the language objects come to exist for the learner.

3. Role and structure of LA 99?

At Essex, as well as being a subject in its own right in the Department of Language and Linguistics, language is part of an interdisciplinary structure in which it plays

a service role to other departments in whose subject the student intends to specialise. More specifically, in the case of Spanish, to which the label LA 491 refers, it is an integral part of all courses included in the Latin American area, viz. government, history, literature and sociology. Students with no Spanish wishing to enter one, or a combination of, these degree schemes must spend one full year studying the language. LA 491 is thus a full time beginners Spanish service course which takes place over one year (eight to nine months, to be more precise), and whose output is meant to be a level roughly comparable to the national A-level(with exclusion of the literary component).

The course falls into three distinct parts, each of them corresponding to one academic term. The first one is a ten week crash course, to be described in more detail in section 4 below. The second one is a stay in Spain, also lasting ten weeks, during which the students are set a variety of tasks. The final part takes place back in Essex and it consists of the implementation of the knowledge acquired up to that stage. I shall now expand on parts two and three of the course.

Following Larsen and Smalley's advice that 'what the learner needs is a small community of sympathetic people who will help him in this difficult period when he is a linguistic and cultural child-adult' (quoted in Schumann 1975: 214), the help is sought of a local Spanish coordinator who will act as the students' contact and friend during their stay in the country. All efforts are made to accommodate each individual student with a different Spanish family. Also, the coordinator sees to it that the students have access to the local cultural institutions, including the university. The students are given all possible encouragement to take full advantage of their stay in the country and mix with the local community. The tasks the students are set are geared to this very end. Normally, there are three projects. First, a study of one aspect of one of the Spanish media (and this includes not only press, radio and TV, but also cinema, theatre and the like). Second a reading project on a subject of their choice, ranging from flamenco music (witches, too, need to be catered for) to astronomy. Finally, a sociological study of one aspect of Spanish life, carried out by means of interviewing a section of the community. On their return to Essex, the students hand in a report (of roughly two to three thousand words) on each of these projects, specifying not only the conclusions they reached, but also,

and most importantly, the procedure they followed to organise and carry through the particular task. Common to all three projects is the idea that the 'input' must be (linguistically) in Spanish, while the language of the 'output' is left to the choice of the student. This follows from the aim of the exercise, viz. the exposure of the learners to the language, both in its oral and in its written form. Oral production is assumed to take place through the very fact of being in the environment for a ten week period, and of being engaged in a number of activities that require interaction with the local Spanish speaking community. An informal oral test is administered on the students' return to Essex, and they receive advance warning of it. On the other hand, writing ability is not particularly sought, although it usually follows quite spontaneously and effortlessly from the other three skills. Hence the free choice as regards the language of the reports.

The third and final part of the course only lasts five weeks, and is a time of consolidation and implementation. The former takes place in the usual form of revision of the ground previously covered. The latter plays a crucial role in leading the student naturally into their Latin American area of study through the language which has until then taken up all of their time and effort. Each week is centred round a seminar on a Latin American topic from one of the disciplines available at the university. For this purpose, the cooperation of colleagues in the respective departments is sought. Needless to say, the whole exercise takes place in Spanish. Previous to the seminar, reading and exercises directly related to the topic are handed out. There are special classes to analyse and comment on the reading, and there is usually an oral session with one of the Spanish tutors to round off the seminar preceding it. Once again, the normal medium is exclusively Spanish. Note that the reading is usually fairly extensive, this providing the students with as much homework as they might wish to do.

4. The crash course.

As outlined above, this takes place over the ten weeks of the autumn term. The number of weekly contact hours is eighteen, and the students are advised to put in an equal number for private study, but no control is kept. For this reason, a reckoning of the total number of hours for the crash course would be extremely difficult, and it would be grossly inaccurate. The only safe statement that can be made here is that it consists of 200+ hours, including both contact time and private study.

The crash course is structured in twenty units, at the rate of two units per week. Each unit receives nine contact hours apportioned as follows: i. verbal workshop (3 h.), ii. text and puzzle analysis (3 h.), iii. lexicon (1 h.), iv. sound and intonation workshop (1 h.), v. morphology (1 h.). A detailed analysis of each component follows presently.

i. Verbal workshop. The setting is informal, and the student is given complete freedom to sit where he pleases, walk about the room, or even leave it temporarily if he feels he needs to. The idea is to produce a relaxed atmosphere in which the learner's ego does not feel threatened, and where his language acquisition device can work at its best. The initiative in the dialogue lies with the teacher, who, as was said before, is the one who scouts about in the universe of language objects and gives the lead to the learner so that he too will explore the territory. This exploration is done by graded steps, in accordance with the philosophy formulated above, and it basically takes the form of what Rivers et.al. call 'pseudo-communication', i.e. 'communication in which the content is structured by the learning situation, rather than springing autonomously from the mind and emotions of the student' (Rivers et.al. 1976: 15). This is not to say that the dialogue is stereotyped. The reality, in fact, is the very opposite one, since the whole approach is based on striving towards giving a real-life content to the situation, away from artificiality and mechanicalism. Spanish is used from the very inception as a means of breaking through into its new ground. Translation is carefully avoided. Natural gestures of the kind which can be found in everyday life are taken advantage of to clarify meanings and enrich the communication load. The central idea consists of building up the learner's Spanish through a process of accumulation, departing from a few elements which are intuitively assimilated. Over and over again the student is advised not to think in terms of his English, but, instead, fall back on the Spanish he already knows and construct from it to express his new thoughts, with the occasional help of the teacher. The approach capitalises on the idea that Spanish is basically a subset of English, a fact that considerably lightens the memory load. Using the technique of 'pseudo-communication', spontaneous dialogues are built up on various aspects of the students' past, present and future lives, using a series of carefully

graded structures, which form the skeleton of the language acquisition process. The vocabulary introduced in the verbal workshop is a minimal one. The reason for this is twofold. First, it avoids memory overloading which could drastically impair the efficiency of the learning device at a time when it ought to fully apply itself to syntax and phonology. Second, it has been amply proven in my own experience that such a reduced vocabulary is perfectly sufficient for handling any common everyday life situation about which the student might like to talk. In addition, it provides a large enough corpus to manipulate the syntactic and phonological structures being introduced and to develop them to the desirable degree of complexity. The assumption underlying all this is, of course, that grammars are generative, i.e. that they make use of limited means to produce unlimited results. Also, that grammars are, or can be structured in the way they are in the Chomskyan model, i.e., they consist, roughly speaking, of a base made up of phrase-structure rules, the output of which could be said to be a finite but very large set of kernel sentences, a number of transformations, whose basic function is to increase the complexity of the kernels, a lexicon, made up of lexical entries, each of them with a semantic, syntactic and phonological feature matrix, and, finally, a set of phonological rules, relating surface forms to each other, whether this happens in the lexicon or in the phonological component proper. The main goal of the method being propounded here is to make the learner aware of the different rules, given a basic store of building blocks, viz. lexical items. The way this awareness is brought about is through experience. In this context, of course, experience does not refer to behaviouristic conditioning, but, rather, to a sort of phenomenological realisation. It is assumed that the learner has to be convinced of the validity and usefulness of the rule before he turns to the usually very demanding, and sometimes painful, task of gestalt switching. The operation here is that this validation and realisation are best attained through a thorough exploration of psychic and social resources.

ii. Text and puzzle analysis. The verbal workshop is followed by extensive homework reading. The texts deal with contemporary topics in the real language of journalism, though graded according to the level attained at each stage of the course. The policy is to keep to the structures introduced in the verbal workshop, although they can be used in new and slightly different contexts, as well as sometimes developed a few steps further. The vocabulary, on the other hand, can be extended quite rapidly. Care is taken, however, that the new words are of high frequency and, alternatively, that they can be worked out easily from English (a point which is taken advantage of in the text in comprehension as

will be seen below. Success in the exercise requires absolute avoidance of translation and to some extent of dictionary use. Abundant notes accompany each text clarifying those points which might otherwise be too obscure for the student to work out by himself. In all other cases, the learner is expected to be perfectly capable of reading through the text without any outside help. This is not to say that the exercise is straightforward, and several (indeed, many) readings might be necessary before the full sense is apprehended. But it is in the very nature of the operation that it must be done by the mind of the student alone. In other words, it is a matter of providing the language acquisition device with an opportunity to exercise itself.

The next step takes place in the form of a class, and it consists in the (slightly more formal) analysis of the text read beforehand. The analysis can deal with the semantic, syntactic, lexical or phonological aspects of the text, and it is intended to fulfil the purposes of clarification, confirmation and expansion. It is to be expected that a good amount of dialogue and discussion will take place, the output of which will be the emergence of new language objects in the mind of the learner, i.e. further progress in the acquisition of the language. Based on an inventory of the new and most important language objects potentially contained in each text, a set of cognitively oriented exercises is devised. The form of the exercises is that of puzzle solving, and their aim in common with that of the rest of the components is to foster the emergence of language objects, i.e. the formation of the grammar in the mind of the learner. The exercises or puzzles are given as homework, and they are commented on, in a similar fashion to the texts, in the next analysis session.

iii. Lexicon. This session is a mixture of analysis and workshop. Its intention is to put some order into the lexicon of Spanish and capitalise on the great similarities between Spanish and the English which is native to the students. More than anywhere else, it is in this area that the idea of Spanish as a subset of English, which has been mentioned already, makes special sense. Three aspects of the lexicon are dealt with. First, false cognates, abundant in number and thus an easy trap to fall into. On the other hand, their phonological similarity with English makes them easy to remember, a fact which must be taken advantage of. Second, word formation. This includes synchronic morphological devices for word formation and diachronic rules of word formation and phonetic change, in

such a way that a whole family of words can be traced back to its original root, thus drastically cutting down the amount of memory load which would otherwise be necessary. Finally, some areas of the Spanish vocabulary are grouped into semantic fields. This has the double purpose of helping memorisation and pointing out any possible contrast with their English counterparts.

iv. Sound and intonation workshop. The importance of phonetics, both psychological and structural, is often underestimated, partly at least because of our great ignorance in whole fields almost virgin to research. As mentioned above, the intimate relationship between pronunciation and the language ego has been pointed out by Guiora. On the other hand, there is some evidence of the importance for the programming of performance of aspects such as syllable quantity, rhythm and intonation. In the case in hand, English is a stress-timed language with concomitant vowel reduction, whilst Spanish is syllable-timed, with no reduction but with synalepha. To an English ear, Spanish may give a machine-gun effect. All this can have crucial consequences for perception, which, in its turn, affects the input to the language acquisition device, and thus the rate of creation of language objects, in the terminology which has been adopted here. This is the reason for this particular component, which aims at the creation of language objects in the area of phonetics using techniques close to the experiential approach which has been sketched above.

v. Morphology. Under this heading I group those aspects of language which are purely or largely idiosynchratic, i.e. sections of the grammar or lexicon which are heavily marked. It is obvious that the role of memory comes to the foreground in all these cases. To some extent, it can be said that these areas do not possess all the characteristic features of language, the most important one of which, viz. the existence of rules, is notoriously absent from them. The most conspicuous of these areas in Spanish is irregular verb conjugation, otherwise crucial in so many respects (pragmatic, semantic, morphophonemic) to the mastery of the language. Special drilling is needed here, and it may well be the case that, as it is a very limited and idiosynchratic set, S-R techniques might be of some use. In accordance with the general tone of the approach being put forward here, however, all possible efforts are made to humanise the mechanical.

Maybe a good way of closing this paper is to quote from the literary critic George Steiner (1969: 89):

> 'To learn a language beside one's native idiom, to penetrate its syntax, is to open for oneself a second window on the landscape of being. It is to escape, even if only partially, from the confinement of the apparently obvious, from the intolerant poverty, so corrosive just because one is unconscious of it, of a single focus and monochrome lens'.

NOTES

1. I am especially grateful to Professor Sam Spicer, who organised the activities just mentioned and without whose constant encouragement this paper could hardly have been conceived. I am also indebted to John Roberts for his stylistic assistance.

2. For an elaboration of the present principles, based on the ideas put forward by Chomsky, see Moravsick (1969), p. 424-428.

3. For an extensive treatment of the subject, see Chomsky's (1959) review of Skinner's Verbal Behavior.

4. A particularly enlightened presentation of these questions is to be found in Moravsick (1969), p.407-424.

5. See especially Lenneberg (1967).

6. See, for example, Chomsky (1965), p.31 ff., and note 14 on p.200-201.

7. In the case of the child, the discovery of the language is isochronous with the discovery of the world.

8. For a lucid exposition of the principles of audio-lingualism, see Rivers (1964), esp. p.10-30.

9. This approach goes along similar lines to the idea of the peer learning community which can be found in Heron (1974).

10. At the same time, this approach being distinct from the traditional direct method, English is used freely to give grammatical and situational explanation, to chat about methodology and the process of language acquisition, to induce in the students a feeling of confidence and relaxation, etc.

11. I am well aware of my distortion of Chomsky's model. What I present here is basically a model of grammar based on a combination of Chomsky (1957) and Chomsky (1965) which, to my mind, best serves our present purpose. For the curious reader, there are two other major Chomskyan models besides those already quoted - Chomsky (1968) ('extended standard theory') and Chomsky (1976) ('trace theory').

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# A FRENCH READING COURSE

P. J. Brew

1. Service-Consumer Relations

Relations between a language department and the consumer departments in a university or elsewhere are always likely to be difficult. The consumer departments often begin with unrealistic expectations of their students (sometimes, it must be admitted, fostered by over-optimistic claims made by the language teachers). Later, finding that these expectations are not realised, they modify their courses to meet the standard of the poorest student, thereby denying those students who have acquired some linguistic fluency and competence the opportunity for putting them into practice, with the result that such students feel frustrated. All this feeds back into the language courses and lowers motivation and morale even more than it already was in students who, after all, had not come to university to specialise in languages but in their own subject area. Added to this, the language department very often has its own concept of what students should be acquiring in the way of language skills, this concept usually being based on current views in the language teaching world in general. But this may well be, and very often is, at variance with the language skills the consumer departments feel they want their students to acquire. The particular example we have seen over the last fifteen years or so is the belief on the part of language departments that teaching oral fluency should take primacy over any other of the language skills, something which the consumer departments either are not consulted about or, indeed, sometimes are even persuaded of. In general, all too often there is a lack of close co-ordination and co-operation, coupled with dissatisfaction and frustration among staff on both sides of the divide, and inevitably, low motivation in the students. In the Department of Language and Linguistics, (formerly the Language Centre) at the University of Essex, we have experienced our share of these problems over the past twelve years.

LA 113, a post O-level French Reading Course, which has been in operation at the University of Essex for this last year, 1976/77, may well, in my opinion, represent the beginning of a period of improved relations between service and consumer departments with closer co-operation, more realistic expectations on the part of the consumers, and a more direct attempt by the servicing department to provide the sort of skills that the consumers want. Particularly pertinent has been the relatively recent weakening of the language teaching world's commitment to oral skills above all else. This is at last being replaced by a more general recognition that where

there are special needs it may be possible to cater for them directly, both in terms of the particular skill and of the particular subject matter. The course originated in a specific request from three particular departments, and they have throughout been quite closely involved with the elaboration of the course, each department appointing one member of staff to collaborate with members of staff in the Department of Language and Linguistics.

2. The Students

The course is designed for first-year undergraduate students in one of three future specialisations: history, literature and the history of art. The students are expected to have 'O' level French, or equivalent, before they begin the course. They are studying at the same time three other courses, including their subject of future specialisation. All four courses are equal to each other in assessment terms, and, therefore, in terms of the amount of time one can expect students to spend on them. Thus, very roughly, it would seem reasonable to think of students having available a minimum of approximately ten hours a week to devote to this particular course, three of these hours being timetabled contact hours. The course is taught over one university year of twenty-five teaching weeks.

3. Course Objectives

The course objectives, as stated in the presentation of the course, addressed to the students, are as follows:

> 'They are, compared with those of most other foreign language courses, quite explicit and quite narrow. They are to give you the ability to read fluently the sort of texts you will be faced with when you go on, after your first year, to specialise in a degree scheme in the department of history, of literature or of history of art. By the end of the course you should be able to read and understand with some confidence on the basis of a much enlarged vocabulary and familiarity with the way in which such texts are patterned, both at the level of the grammatical structure of the sentences and at the level of the discourse structure of the text, that is, the way the author organises and develops his argumentation.

> You should be able to write accurate summaries in English of what you read, sifting the essential material from the incidental, and, we hope, be quick at searching out specific information in books and be able to make good translations of short passages. You should also have an increased awareness of, and ability to evaluate, some of the many other dimensions there are in any texts, such as esthetic and rhetorical effects and how they are achieved, or the presuppositions the author inevitably makes as he writes, though he does not express them overtly and may, indeed, be unaware of them, or even attempting to conceal them. So we see "understanding a text" as a creative activity, not at all a passive skill as it is sometimes described, but demanding and challenging. The formulation of hypotheses as to the meaning, using all the evidence available, will be an important technique for you to acquire."

4. The Texts

The basic material of the course consists of approximately forty texts, varying in length between four hundred and eighteen hundred words. They are all extracts from the sorts of books that these students will be reading in their subjects of future specialisation. They were all chosen in consultation with the members of staff of the consumer departments. The literature texts are taken from seventeenth and eighteenth century drama and prose classics. The history and art texts are mostly by more modern writers, but in content relate, again, to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, thus giving some degree of unity of theme to the collection of texts as a whole. This particular theme having been chosen because it, in turn, relates to one of the other three first year courses, "The Enlightenment", which is compulsory for all students. Thus the literature texts are distinct not only by being written at an earlier period, but, more important, in being narrative in structure (some in verse) as opposed to the expository structure of the art and history texts. This degree of heterogeneity, while adding variety and thus interest to the course, also adds to the scope of the types of reading skills to be taught. It is too early yet to say what effect, if any, this factor will have on the success of the course. In general though, there is certainly some room for improvement in the choice and ordering of the texts. One possibility is that, for example, all the history texts could be much more closely related to one

another and that there could be a development of the thematic basis through the history texts. This would, I think, improve the motivation of students in studying them, for they would feel that as a useful by-product they were learning something in history as well as in French.

The reader may well at this point be wondering whether the primary criterion for ordering and even, to some extent at least, choosing the texts should not be linguistic. In fact we have preferred to order them by content and to introduce a linguistic progression by means of the annotations provided for each text (see below). In addition there is an elementary pedagogical progression in that the rate at which the texts are studied is stepped up from one a week during the first term (10 weeks), to two a week for the rest of the year.

5. Text Annotations

In the choice of texts, then, there was little or no concession made to the relatively low starting level of the students' language competence. In describing this as 0-level or equivalent, we may in fact be giving a false impression of what that level really is, of the size of the gap to be bridged, that is, between the starting point and the target. For of course very few students, when they start the course, have been studying French at all recently: a minimum gap between the time when the student last studied French and when he began this course was two years, but in most cases, the gap was longer; as long as twenty years in the case of some mature students. In addition to this, it must be remembered that if a student did not pursue French beyond '0' level, the reason was probably that he was not doing particularly well at the subject.

To enable students to cope with the texts, therefore, a certain amount of annotation is provided. Three categories of annotation were given for each text: the 'A list', the 'B list' and grammatical notes.

5.1 The 'A list'

This consists of lexical items occurring in the text to which the list relates, but which are judged, a) not to be known by students already, and b) to occur in other texts of the type the course is designed to cover frequently enough for it to be worth the student's while learning such items by heart. There is an 'A list' for each text comprising an average of 30-40 items, giving a total learned vocabulary of some 1200-1500 words by the end of the course, over and above a 'basic' vocabulary assumed to be already known.

'A list' items are listed in canonical form and the English gloss provided is of general equivalence, not necessarily one that would yield an adequate translation for the particular text to which it initially relates. Items are listed in order of occurrence in the text, and line numbers are provided. Items re-appearing in a later text are included in the 'A list' for that text, but with a reference back to the first occurrence in place of the English gloss. Thereafter, they are assumed to be known.

5.2 The 'B list'

A second category of lexical annotations consists of notes on words which may well give difficulty to the student, but which are not of sufficient generality to be included in the 'A' category. Annotations in the 'B' list are not in fact confined to vocabulary items, but extend to certain grammatical points of a very particular nature, and to background information which the student may need in order to make sense of the text. Since the relevance of these notes is only to the one particular text, lexical items are listed exactly as they occur in the text, not in the canonical form, and the gloss given is a gloss which is applicable only to that particular text.

5.3 Grammatical Notes

Much of the 'basic' grammar of the language is assumed to be known already. Points of grammatical difficulty peculiar to particular texts are dealt with in the 'B lists'. In addition, given that only a recognition knowledge is needed, the availability of context as a basis for intelligent guess work makes a general explicit exposition of many other points unnecessary. This still leaves a (relatively small) amount of grammar which, being (like 'A list' lexical items) general but not already known, does require explanation. This has mostly taken the form of notes to the particular texts in which the points have first appeared, with reference back when the same or a related difficulty appears in a later text. In a revised version of the course, these notes will be collated and incorporated in a short separate grammatical section, with exercises. The main points which have emerged as requiring special attention are as follows: verb morphology; tense structure and use in English and French; pronouns in general, 'en' and 'dont' in particular, reflexive verbs and the different purposes they serve; negatives, especially 'ne...que', and 'ne' used alone; factitive constructions; the partitive article.

6. Comprehension Questions

A set of about a dozen questions were attached to each text, their purpose being to give some focus to students' efforts to understand the text. A few were fairly straightforward questions, the answers to which could be gleaned from even a relatively superficial familiarity with the text. Others drew attention to points in the text where the inexperienced or careless reader might be misled (in many cases such points having been discovered by the question-setters having themselves been momentarily misled on a first reading). Most important, however, are the questions designed to improve students' ability to perceive the main elements in the overall conceptual structure of the text and the relations between them, and to distinguish these from what is merely repetitions (albeit disguisedly so), or exemplificatory, or incidental. Finally, there are questions designed to sharpen students' critical faculties, to spot inferences and presuppositions and to assess the validity of arguments, whether overt or covert.

This awareness of the global pattern of coherence in a text is what enables students, indeed any reader, to make the intelligent guesses about lower-level lexical and syntactic problems mentioned above, and is one reason why the textual annotations are not intended to cover exhaustively all points of difficulty which may arise.

7. Dictionary Use

A quite different reason why we do not attempt to provide exhaustive lexical annotation is that when students have completed the course and are reading French texts on their own, a dictionary will be an essential tool for many years. Therefore an essential part of the course is to foster the habit and skill of using a dictionary with confidence and efficiency.

8. Text Discussion by Teachers

One of the more innovative elements of the course material consisted of recorded discussion of the texts by members of the teaching staff. The thinking which led to these was that the discussions which took place between teachers in order to agree on the set of comprehension questions were more interesting, fresher and more honest in revealing the responses of experienced readers to the texts than was the later discussion between one teacher and a class of students. In taking the step of recording these discussions, we enabled students to 'eavesdrop' on them,

and so gain a clearer idea of one aspect of their 'target behaviour', i.e. that of an experienced reader. They will realise that such readers also have to work quite hard to tease out the meaning from a text and can, like them, be misled. They will be encouraged by the example to challenge the writer and sometimes lay the blame for confusion at his door. They will also have the benefit of contributions of background information from a teacher from the consumer department - often the one who chose the text for inclusion on the course. This involvement of the consumer departments is of great importance too for reasons touched on the opening section of this paper.

9. Text Discussion by Students

Partly as an antidote to the enforced passivity of students when listening to the recorded discussions, but mainly because we believe discussion is an important step towards comprehension, student discussions are also an important feature of the course. This works well when seminar groups are broken up into small groups of 3 to 5, each reporting back at the end of the session. We also tried it with the plenary 'lecture' session. The nature of the furniture in a tiered lecture theatre dictated that the small groups in fact be pairs, and this worked less well. However we look for improvement in this respect in future when plenary sessions will be held in the one room in the university of the appropriate size but with movable furniture.

10. The Examination

The paper consists of a list of 'A list' lexical items given in a brief context, and comprehension/paraphrase/translation questions on a seen text and an unseen text, the latter weighted 50% of the total. More important than the format of the exam however, is that the consumer departments be made fully aware of the standard of achievement it reveals.

11. The Future

Among the developments we look forward to are a greater degree of self-tutoring on the course, which seems ideally suited to such experimentation; an extension of the types of

reading skill covered to include extensive reading for specific purposes, though we feel that these can only be soundly developed on the basis of good intensive reading; a properly conducted ongoing evaluation of the course to monitor in particular its innovative aspects; and, in the longer term, the placing of this course in the context of a general study and reading skills course for all students in their own language.